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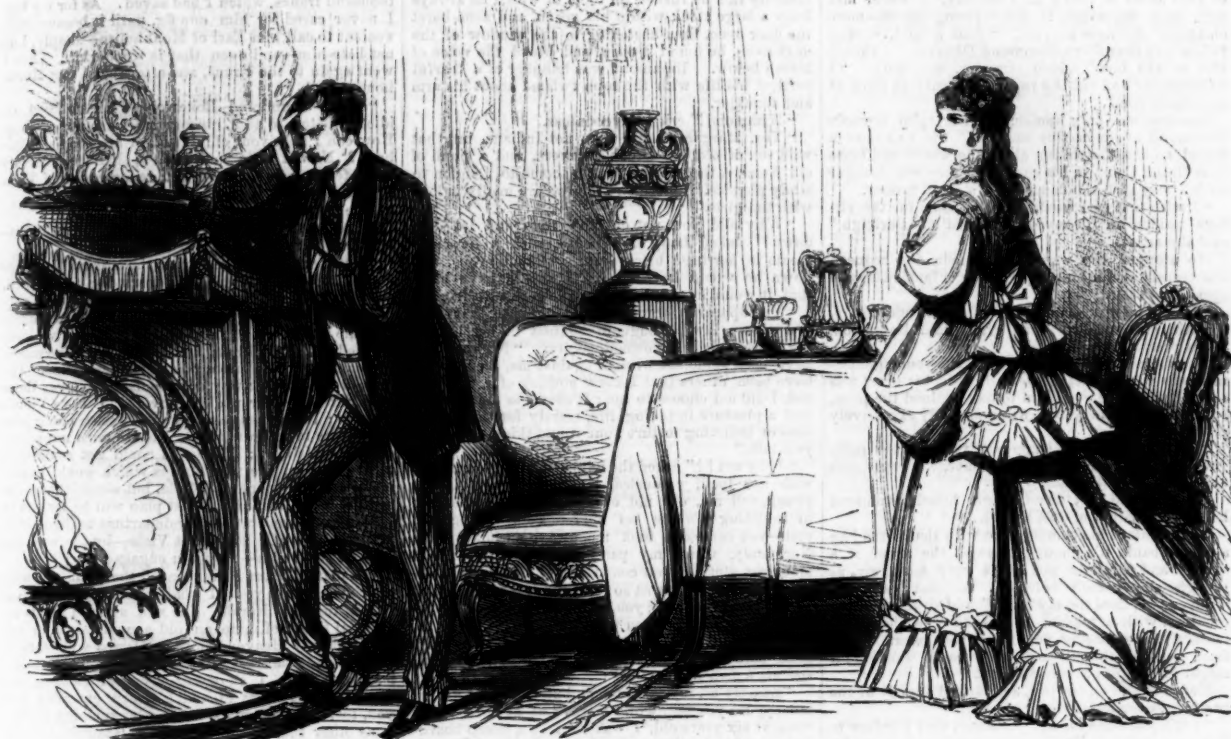
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[SELF DOUBTS.]

GRAND COURT.

BY THE

Author of "Sometimes Sapphire, Sometimes Pale," &c.

CHAPTER XV.

All earth-hidden treasures are thy dower,
On the earth great mastery and power;
Park and palace thy goodwill assigns,
Dainty victuals and flow'r-fragrant wines. W. A.

THERE he was, Rokewood—grizzled moustache, glittering eyes, leering smile. The villain wore a long dressing robe of crimson satin that had been the favourite loose dress of the late earl. His hands were upon Norah's shoulders, his dreadful face looked into hers.

"Twice in one night," he said, bitterly. "Oh, girl, I think it will take one sharper than thou art to outwit me!" He wrenched her shoulder as he spoke. "Thou, and thy plots, and thy scampish admirers, thy vicious adorers"—another wrench—"all shall be frustrated by the superior wisdom of the man who is your master."

"I pray God to deliver me out of your hands," replied Norah, "and henceforth I leave it to His superior wisdom. I will not plot or scheme any more. I give my cause into His hand, and your punishment."

"We will fasten up the shutters in your rooms, henceforth. We will have them screwed down. We will give you a taste of candle-light and darkness. Nay, I have it in my heart to chain you to a post."

The wretch, mad with rage and guilty remorse, shook the slender form of the earl's orphan daughter savagely.

Hammond had heard all.

Hammond, by this time, struggled like a maniac in the hands of the men-servants.

"If you be men, if you be not fiends, assist your young lady to escape. Can you not see that her life is in sore peril, from that ruffian? Understand that his relative, the present countess, will descend

Lady Norah's large fortune, and both of them scheme to take her life."

Rokewood had grown deadly white. This scene took place in a large, plainly furnished apartment, belonging to the servants. One of the men had lighted the gas, and the rays fell upon the face of a demon clothed in human shape. At that moment, the infuriated secretary would gladly have pierced the impassioned young Danvers to the heart. The men-servants hesitated; alas, for poor human nature, alas for the instinct of self-preservation, alas for the evils of poverty and malignant character, and the power which this bad man possessed, of turning out these men, each with a bad name, upon the cold charities of this pitiless world.

He was the master, the great man, the ruler and adviser of their new lady; he had given already handsome presents—his rule was a lavish one—he had made great promises: each felt instinctively that three or four gold pieces would find their way from the pocket of the secretary into theirs, if they did his bidding; perhaps even a crisp, new five-pound-note apiece. Oh, it was hard; none of the men knew much of the earl's young daughters; the vile Rokewood had informed them that they were fast and most imprudent girls, who needed lock, and ward, and watch, to keep them from "going wrong."

It was convenient to these men to believe all this, to remain silent regarding the severity which was practised towards the two girls.

"Have you the blood of men?" asked Hammond, struggling, poor brave fellow, piteously. "Does it not rage and boil in your veins, to see him wrench and twist her pretty arms, her beautiful hands, in that fashion?—Norah, Norah, an action shall be entered against that man! he shall stand in a felon's dock!"

Rokewood released his hold of Norah, and strode towards wounded Hammond with clenched fist—but here, strange to say, the instinct of those men interposed to prevent a blow being given to a man wounded, and a prisoner. They stood between the ruffian and young Danvers.

Rokewood paused.

"Take him back to his bed," he said, "and bar all the window shutters, lock his door; two of you watch by his side: to-morrow he shall go to the police-station. I know you, Mr. Danvers, you have spoken in your natural voice; and I have penetrated your cleverly got up disguise; your accomplice is doubtless that admirable son of nobody, who calls himself Ruthven, who has come to London to starve in a back street, and who has presumed to make love to the Lady Viola Beaumont. To-morrow you will be committed on a charge of burglary and abduction, the police will hunt out Ruthven, and I have no doubt a few years residence in a penal settlement will cool your love fever, and abate your courage; your good connections may stand in your favour, but your mad friend—" Rokewood laughed cruelly—"will perhaps end his days at Portland—he shall if I can manage it."

"You must first prove that Mr. Ruthven has anything to do with it," cried Danvers. "As for the court of law, I think you would not quite like to drag the name of this precious countess before the world, where her antecedents will be looked into. The fortune of the twins, it will be shown, will become hers if they die; depend upon it the eyes of all England will rest then on those girls with pity, and on you with deepest suspicion."

There was the strong and flashing light of truth in these bold words, and Rokewood winced under them.

"Take him to his room," he said, hastily, "tie him down in the bed if he tries to escape, lock the door, bar the windows."

The tone expressed more. It said: "Do as I tell you, help me through with this annoying affair, and you shall be paid well."

Hammond was led off, indignant and silent, by this time, and then Granger, cruel Granger came, and led Norah to her room. Rokewood followed, but he did not remain to talk that night; he barred up all the shutters with his own hands, then turning gruffly to Granger, he said:

"Make her go to bed, and in the morning give her bread and water only for breakfast."

Norah sank, weeping upon her bed when Rokewood was gone. The hypocritical Granger lighted a lamp, and sat at a little distance pretending to read.

"If I was you, Lady Norah, if a servant might presume to speak, I should advise your undressing and trying to sleep. I am sure all the awful trouble that you have given my lady, and poor Mr. Rokewood, it's something quite terrible, trying to run away with young men."

Granger was a plain, sour-visaged individual, whom the other sex did not greatly appreciate.

"It's something awful; I wonder Mr. Rokewood is so kind as he is, that's all I can say. I never met with such depravity, in quite young ladies—mere children," Granger snorted. "And a wild, wicked fellow like that there Hammond Danvers. I should like to kill him," added Granger, spitefully. "I wish master had cut the rope. I would as soon as say thank you."

Granger was only human, and her spite towards Hammond arose in this manner. He had once a friend, an artist, strolling about the woods and lanes near Grand Court in his company; they met Granger with a rosy girl, the daughter of a small farmer.

"I wish that girl would sit as a model for the village maiden in Tennyson's 'Lord of Burleigh,'" said the artist.

He stopped the women and made the request, courteously doffing his cap. Granger fancied he was speaking to her.

"I shall be most happy, sir," she said, smiling.

"Ah, not you, my good girl," said Hammond, "this pretty Janet Clifford."

The moment the words were out, the young gentleman saw what a mistake he had made, his heart was so kind that it grieved him to have pained the prim, sour woman of thirty-five, who was really excessively plain.

"You see," he said, eagerly, "you are too pale, you have more the air of a Londoner, whereas Janet has quite a country face."

But it would not do; Granger hated Hammond henceforth with a mortal hatred.

"To think of his coming here with that dress like a mountebank, it's enough to raise the anger of a saint," and Granger put on a very meek air, as though she herself belonged to that category.

"Loves you, does he, my lady?" added the insolent creature, with a toss of her head; "he showed it, certainly, in exposing your life in that basket, down from one of the highest windows in London; it might have upset at any moment."

Norah sat up on the bed, and looked angrily at the prating, impertinent young woman.

"I tell you once for all, Granger, that I refuse to have the name of Mr. Danvers mentioned to me by you; the memory of the descent in the basket is horrible to me. I wish to sleep. Remember," and the young girl's voice faltered, "that you have kept me, all of you, almost without food during the whole of the day; remember, at least, that you are a woman, Granger, and do not quite lose all womanly pity and compassion. Let me sleep."

Granger again tossed her head.

"Sleep, and welcome, my lady," she said; but you had better allow me to undress you."

To this Norah consented, and soon afterwards the poor, weary child slept deeply.

The morning found Rokewood knocking at the door of the countess, and asking to be admitted. Her sharp, clear voice called out an invitation to enter, and he entered.

It was a somewhat chill, though bright morning of autumn, and there was a fire in the gorgeously fitted up boudoir of the countess. She was dressed in a long robe of dark blue silk, fastened about the waist with a broad golden belt, and her dark hair hung loosely over her shoulders. Before the fire was drawn up a table of dark rosewood, on which was a breakfast tray and a superb breakfast service of the most costly Worcester china—chocolate, cold pheasant's wing, a delicate French roll, and the purest, sweetest country butter from one of the Grand Court farms, composed her breakfast.

Lady Monkhouse was eating with a good appetite. She rose to her feet when her uncle entered.

"Will you breakfast with me?" she asked.

"No, no—I have no time to think of eating. I have weightier cares on my shoulders; finish your breakfast."

Rokewood threw himself upon a velvet couch, and stared moodily at the glancing flames of the fire.

"I want your opinion on this last affair; shall we prosecute these scamps, or shall we not? It would serve them right, and I should like to send them to prison for a twelvemonth. I believe it might be done."

"Those Indians?" asked the countess.

"Ah! I did not see you last night, you were asleep. Listen to what happened."

Then Mr. Rokewood informed the countess that,

finding himself on the previous night unable to sleep, he had risen and walked about his chamber. Suddenly he remembered that the key of Norah's room was missing; he believed that he had locked her in, but fancied he had mislaid the key. Thereupon he began to search for it, and discovered that it was to all appearances lost. He then went and listened outside of the door of her room, but that was only the ante-room, and he heard nothing at first. Presently, he was almost certain that he heard a man's voice in the school-room beyond, calling out: "Courage, courage, the basket can't upset with your weight." Hearing this he rushed for tools, of which he always kept a large stock within his reach, and soon burst the door open, then hastening to the window of the next room, he found it open, and heard the voice of Norah below. Hammond was hanging at a fearful peril of his life with the rope twisted about his arm and shoulder.

"Hammond!" cried the countess.

"Yes, Margaret, they were not Indians, but that wild son of old Sir Brook Danvers, and a pupil of old Somers, the rector, who is come to London to study physics. Those two fellows are madly in love with the girls."

"Why did you not cut the rope and let him down?" asked Lady Monkhouse, with a ferocious gleam in her keen black eyes. "Cut the rope, and down he would have gone. I should have liked that, it would have killed the girl Norah with fright."

"You appear to forget, Lady Monkhouse, that there is a severe law in England against taking human life," responded Rokewood, coldly. "Norah would have been sufficient witness against me, there might have been others that I know nothing of. It was a risk I did not choose to run; it seems to me that you find a pleasure in taking life, merely for the happiness of inflicting torture; one would think so to hear you talk."

"Why not?" asked the wild and wicked countess, with her loud, unmusical laugh. "When I was young, tell me, did not everybody find a pleasure in inflicting torture on me? You, among the rest—you came and took me away, an infant from Normandy, where my parents had perished in a mountain storm; you constituted yourself my guardian—the property was so left, that if I had died, it would have gone from you, otherwise you would have killed me, you know you would."

"Perhaps I should," responded Rokewood, with a grim smile. "A child's life is nothing weighed against a man's interest."

"Exactly so, my good uncle, but you spent all my money, did you not, while I was out at nurse? and then, at six years old, I was sent to a cheap boarding-school in Germany; sometimes you paid for me there, sometimes you did not. I had my share of ill usage and starvation, and at twelve you took me away and put me to learn horsemanship with a travelling French circus. Ah! the life I led there, the blows, the ill usage, the bad things I heard and saw! In my German school I had been taught, at least, propriety and modesty; my mind was as pure as my heart was sad; but now I grow in time corrupt in speech and in thought as they were."

"You had no natural good dispositions, dear Margaret," said Rokewood, with a ferocious smile, "else you would not so naturally have fallen into evil. Why, were you not caught stealing money out of a bag? and did you not sell another woman's gold earrings for fifty pounds?"

"Yes, yes, all of that," responded the countess, with her mocking laugh, "all of that, and worse; at last they beat and beat me so that I ran away. I heard you were in London, and I determined to find you out; how I hid in barns, and roosted with the fowls; how I stole round to the kitchens of the French houses, and begged fruit, cheese, bread, wine, milk, and nearly always got it; how I found my way to the coast, and the captain of a small vessel which plied between Southampton and Havre took me over out of sheer charity and admiration for my beauty, which gleamed through my rags, like the sun through clouds; how I reached England, begged my way to London—where you were not, then—and passed a dreary time of beggary and cold, hunger, and rags; insulted by the rich, whom I learned to hate with a hatred that will never die, driven from street to street by the police, until I grew desperate, and picked a lady's pocket of her gold watch, and was sent to prison in consequence. I need not tell you more, you know it all, kind Uncle Rokewood. You robbed the babe whom the mountain storm had orphaned, and then you cast her out to buffet with the world, until she grew mad with suffering, until she learned to hate the whole of mankind with a ferocious hatred, which has in it something akin to the fiends."

The countess laughed, a bitter, mocking, laugh.

"Then you found me, dressed me, gave me lectures, were pleased with my beauty, sent me to a

circus in Paris, where I did wonders—and now came my time of rescue. Heaven sent in my way a young Frenchman, noble as a demigod, handsome as Adonis, who loved me; he might have reclaimed me from the state of hard hatred, cold malice, unbefitting my youth, in which I lived; he would have married me. I loved, yes, I believe I loved Albert, at least it was the nearest approach to human feeling or passion, that I ever experienced; and then you sold me to a hideous French banker, whom I hated, a man ugly as Vulcan. He died without a will, and all I had were some jewels, and about two thousand francs, which I had saved. As for my boy, I never cared for him one fig, until it became convenient to call him Earl of Monkhouse—simply, I do not hate him—and even that is wonderful. Then I went again to the circus, and after that I met Monkhouse—"

"Stop!" thundered Rokewood, "I have been an idiot to listen to this outrageous trash for so long. How can I help your childhood, or anybody's childhood? Now, I want your advice; shall we prosecute these fellows, or shall we get repossession of Viola by stratagem?"

The countess paused in thought.

"Prosecute them," she said, at length, "and compel them to restore Viola to your care."

"But it will create an uproar throughout the kingdom; attention will be called to us, and to the will, to the sudden death of Lord Monkhouse, surmise will be busy, the girls will create an interest, the question will be raised of whether we have ill-used these children, and if they die afterwards, suspicion will rise into a roar of condemnation. We have it all our own way now; nobody believes these girls, except their madcap lovers. I have Viola's address; I will engage to gain possession of her person before to-morrow night. No, we must not prosecute those fellows; I believe I could get some kind of power from the magistrates which would enable me to seize the person of Viola, but she might appeal against it; so I think the best plan will be for you to hasten your preparations for departure to Cumberston Manor, and I will see about Viola—by the way, the French governess—have you engaged her?"

"Madame Diana?" responded the countess, with a grimace; "oh yes. I shall to-day introduce her to that insolent Norah. She will arrive; she is an especial friend of mine, an old acquaintance in my circus days. Heavens, how old Diana will stare at these couches and carpets, these china vases so priceless; and when I show her my steel caskets, my diamonds, my great gleaming green emeralds, and you, too," nodding her head at a languishing blonde, none other than the mother of the late earl, and the grandmother of the beautiful twins, "you too," nodding her head, "whose fair complexioned, haughty son, we have tricked—tricked? What will she say to you, proud grandmother Monkhouse in your pearls, low bodice, pink poplin, and diamond bandeau? You are young there, but we have you old at Grand Court—old and thin, and aristocratic—with gold-headed stick, black velvet dress, lace cap, and blazing ruby brooch fastening up your white lace kerchief; and oh, you look naughty!—you look in your canvas frame at Grand Court, as if you were coming down to trample me under foot for daring to be Lady Monkhouse, too! Aye, and the town shall talk of my receptions next spring, the prime minister shall drive here and kiss my hand; I will marry a foreign prince; I will wear a crown before I die! I—I who have sat on doorsteps begging! I, in spite of your pearls, and pink poplin, and languishing courtly airs—"

"Hush, hush!" cried Rokewood, "whenever you begin to talk to the portraits, you run perfectly mad!"

CHAPTER XVI.

How shall I bless thee? No longer beside thee, I can but love thee, and lose thee, and pray; Yet will God love thee, and keep thee, and guide thee—Thou knowest all that my heart would say!

Dora Greenwell

WHILE Philip Ruthven fled down the wide staircase, holding the slight form of Viola in his arms, he whispered into her ear, words reassuring, and passionately tender, fraught meanwhile with a chivalrous devotion, and impregnated with the deep and touching respect, due at once to her exalted rank, and her unmerited misfortunes. Viola, bewildered, terrified, astonished, yet vibrating through her whole frame with wild hope of regaining the precious gift of freedom, did not venture to speak one sentence, until she found herself seated in the cab. By her side was Philip in his strange dress, glittering all over with magnificent jewels. He drew up the window on one side, then leaning out, he watched for the arrival of Hammond and the Lady Norah. Then they heard the report of a pistol. Viola clung desperately to the arm of Philip.

"Norah, Norah," she said, "my darling, my pre-

cious sister. Let me run back, let me die with her, they have killed my Norah."

And the grief of the overwrought Viola bid fair to rise into a tempest of uncontrollable hysteria. Philip constricted himself to hold her back in her seat.

"Lady Viola, dearest, sweetest lady, for whom I would die a thousand deaths," said the young lover, passionately, "you must not run back to your prison and your jailer—nay, wait—I will myself return, and rescue your sister from this ruffian secretary—only we must place you in safety first. Drive on," he said, to the cabman, "drive on to that corner of Oxford Street, where we agreed to wait in case of any accident."

They were driven on then to the place indicated, and there they awaited the arrival of Hammond and the Lady Norah. The reader does not want to be informed that neither of them arrived that night. But in a short while arrived the men, who had dressed and attitudinised for the occasion. Each of these persons was provided with a great coat, which coats had been left in a convenient spot close at hand, and kept watch over by another of their allies. Thus the men were enabled, by doffing their red turbans, and wrapping themselves in their great coats, to pass through the streets without creating much remark; but the news which they had to tell Philip was terrible news. Hammond, wounded by a revolver, seized from one of the men, and the Lady Norah remaining a prisoner in the power of Rokewood.

"I wish those horrible revolvers had not been loaded," murmured Philip; and then he remembered a little bitterly that it had been his impatient spirit which had insisted upon the necessity of firearms.

Lady Viola was rejoiced that Norah was unhurt, but she was, at the same time, in wild fear for her safety. During the ride to Strawberry Lodge, Viola continued to weep silently, every now and then pausing to entreat Philip to set about obtaining the rescue of her sister.

"Let us find out our relations, Mr. Ruthven," she said; "Colonel Claverhouse is abroad, but there is Mr. Mountroy, who would have claimed the estate if papa had not married; he is a very distant connection, but surely he would have pity on us."

Philip promised everything that she desired. It was bitter to the young student to find his beloved so weighed down by terror and anxiety regarding the fate of her sister, that she could hardly reply to his words, or indeed, pay him any attention at all. He felt sure that she loved him, but her love seemed of a weak kind as compared to his. He could not understand how affection for a relative could stand between a man or a woman, and that other love, the only love of which the nameless young man knew anything. He was, or believed himself to be, an orphan, he had neither brother nor sister, very few friends, no interest, no money, his whole soul had gathered itself together into one concentrated love for the beautiful Viola—the lights in her large hazel eyes were as the lights of paradise to him. She might have been an angel sitting at the outer gate of heaven, amid the clouds of glory which great painters have delineated and master spirits in poetry have sung, and she could hardly have awakened a purer love, a more reverential devotion than she had already aroused in the young student of medicine. He thought of her, and of nothing but her, and it seemed to him hard and strange that all her thoughts were given to her sister.

However, he ventured no remonstrance. It was a drive of an hour or more in the cab from London to Chiswick. Strawberry Lodge was situated in a lane some way beyond Chiswick Mall, a lane where there are several fine, old-fashioned houses, standing in wide grounds of their own, and Strawberry Lodge was one of these old-fashioned houses. The cab stopped before the iron gate, a tall gate, an avenue of trees led up to the house; but Viola could see nothing of the building, the trees met overhead, and the wind whispered mournfully among the branches. "Norah, my poor Norah, why are you not here?" cried Viola, and she turned her tearful face up towards the bright sky, where the moon was sailing. "Come, Lady Viola," said Philip; "the gate has been left open on purpose for us. Come in, you are cold."

He paid the cabman, and, then offering his arm to Viola, led her through the gate and under the trees. Viola had neither cloak nor shawl, and the September night was chill. She shuddered, shivered, wept, and mourned the absence of her twin sister. "We have never been separated before, Mr. Ruthven," she began.

"Call me Philip," he entreated, in a low tone. Then Viola awoke to the pain in his tone, and she felt how much he had risked for her sake.

"Philip," she said; "dear Philip," and her sweet voice trembled with emotion. "I am not ungrateful,

I shall ever regard you with the tenderest gratitude, and in the future you will find me—true—"

Her voice faltered over the word, it was not much, but it expressed to Philip everything he wanted to learn. "True," it filled his heart with the wildest joy, the most entrancing visions of future hope, flashed before his mental vision. "True," did not that promise him, that earl's daughter as she was, heiress, beauty, and spoiled darling of the world as she would be, when once she was rescued from the clutches of the secretary, that she would still be faithful to the youthful memories of the rector's garden, and the happy days when Grand Court had been her noble father's house, and her magnificent home.

He covered her hand with passionate kisses, he uttered words, burning, and which startled her with their intensity. She did not shrink, however; she clung to his arm, and for a few moments, while they were pacing the long avenue, even Norah was forgotten; but when they stood before the large red brick house, Viola called out again all at once, with an exceeding bitter cry:

"Ah, my Norah, my twin sister, Philip. We have never slept apart, never in all our lives. Ah, if she dies, I, too, shall die."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Philip, hastily, as he rang the house-bell. "Calm yourself, Viola, all will be well. Listen to the loud barking of that intolerable pet dog of Hammond's aunt's. Another moment and you will see Miss Danvers, the very funniest old maid in Christendom, immensely rich, and enormously fond of Hammond. If he asked her to keep a white elephant for him to ride, in her stables, I think she would do it. I have dined here on Sunday with him, long ago. Don't be alarmed if she is stiff, prim, and odd; she is good, at least Hammond says so."

The hall door fell back, and Viola's eyes, accustomed to the dim and shadowy moonlight, were blinded by the dazzling blaze which a large gas lamp threw on the hall, paved with squares of black and white stone. There were stuffed birds in glass cases in this hall, and old-fashioned chairs grotesquely carved in oak; there were enormous jars filled with dead rose leaves, which emitted a sort of old world perfume—sweet and refreshing; a winding staircase—wide, and covered with a gay carpeting of flowery pattern—led to the upper regions.

Miss Danvers, only sister of Sir Brook, the father of brave Hammond, was a little lady with aristocratic, but somewhat masculine, features. She wore a false front of flat, dark curls under a cap with rich green satin ribbons; she wore a green silk dress, a very heavy gold chain, a large gold watch in the band of her dress, and her lace collar was fastened with a great golden brooch, while on her fingers flashed precious stones by the dozen. Her voice was harsh and like a man's, as is often the case with healthy and vigorous old women. She held a key in her hand, and she looked up at Ruthven with a very surprised and somewhat displeased glance.

"And pray where is my nephew?" asked the old lady. "What have you done with him?"

Her quick, black eye rested on Viola for a moment but soon flashed back again to Philip.

"If any harm has happened to my nephew," pursued Miss Danvers, "I will wash my hands of the whole affair. I thought it a madcap scheme from the very first."

"Miss Danvers," said Ruthven, "I fear Hammond was a little hurt; he was attacked by that ruffian secretary, of whom he told you so much; but they will, of course, attend to him, and he will soon be all right again; don't be alarmed, I assure you nothing but his arm is hurt."

"Nothing but his arm," repeated Miss Betty Danvers, in her masculine tones; "and pray, young man, how would you like your arm broken, or shot at, or any of the sort? Nothing but his arm, indeed. So you got your friend into a scrape and then left him to manage the best way he could—that's friendship, is it?"

"Miss Danvers," said Philip, warmly, "I am not cowardly, nor unfaithful."

"I don't know anything at all about that," retorted Miss Betty, wrathfully. "I only know that that dear, brave, noble boy is wounded, and lying in the house of some stranger, who will perhaps send him to prison for entering his dwelling under false pretences. Ugh, I wish there were no such things as girls in the world," added Miss Betty, in a tone of deep disgust. "I never cared for girls myself, and all this trouble has befallen poor Hammond, just for the sake of a couple of girls. I daresay they deserved what they got."

"Miss Danvers," said the earl's daughter, in an imperious tone, "it is misfortune which brings me a suppliant to your doors, and if you believe the truth of what your noble-hearted nephew has told you, if you believe that I and my precious, dearest sister, my Norah," and here the clear voice of the earl's daughter faltered, "are in deadly peril of life and

limb, that we are compelled to fly at all risks from the power of a wicked man and woman, whom our father, in a moment of fatal infatuation, appointed as our guardians—if, Miss Danvers, you believe all this, you will extend the hospitality of your house to me, with the courtesy that is the charm of a true gentlewoman; if you do not believe me, give me at least shelter, until morning, and then Mr. Ruthven will seek some other lady who can pardon me my misfortunes, seeing that heaven has seen fit to inflict them upon me."

"She speaks well," said Miss Betty, putting up her gold eye-glasses, and scanning the sweet face of Viola; "she speaks with all the calm dignity of a haughty Beaumont. Ah, my dear, I have listened to your grandfather in the House of Peers, long ago, as the old song says, when he was a gallant young noble, and I was a sprightly young lass; he had just your calm utterance, my dear, just that flashing eye. Well, well, times change, and we all move round with the times; here am I, a sour old spinster, living in my queer old house at Chiswick, and he—he lies asleep, asleep in the grave at Belrose, in the vault beneath the village church—heigho!"

The old lady wiped her gold-rimmed glasses, which had been dimmed with a tear.

"Well, my dear," she said, laying her hand kindly on the shoulder of Lady Viola, "where did you say your sister was? why isn't she with you?"

Viola wept.

"She is a prisoner, Miss Danvers."

And then Philip Ruthven related to the old lady the history of the escape, and the revolver. She listened, angrily.

"I will proceed against him," she said; "the ruffian! My nephew Hammond, wounded—my nephew—and he may die of the wound. I shall order a carriage—I shall drive there—I will go and nurse my boy, if he is too ill to be moved!"

Philip entreated Miss Danvers to be calm.

"Wait until morning, then I wish you would go, and see this man; you might shame him out of his cruelty; you might threaten him with exposure and a law suit."

"And so I will!" said the old lady, vehemently.

Now that her temper had cooled down, now that she understood that it was not the fault either of Viola or of Ruthven, that her beloved nephew lay wounded in the house of the enemy, she became on the instant hospitality and courtesy itself.

She led the way into a large handsome dining-room, that opened out of the hall. It was a room furnished in rich crimson silk damask; the chairs and sideboard were of dark oak, the ceiling was painted to represent the flight into Egypt; against the walls hung family portraits of the Danvers. You could not see the walls in this room for the portraits, all kinds and manners of coiffeurs were here, all sorts of powdered periwigs, and golden curls, cropped hair, and long love locks, as worn by the gay cavaliers, who shed their brave blood in the cause of the first Charles, and his more fortunate son. A cheerful fire burnt in the low grate, and the long table was spread with delicacies.

"Now, my love," said the old lady, taking the arm of Viola, "come to the table and make a good meal. I believe you are nearly starved."

This was true, and poor Viola, in spite of her terrible anxiety about Norah, sat down and ate of the delicious, cold, roast chicken, the delicate tongue, the French roll and fresh fruit, like one who has not tasted good food for days—and this, indeed, was the case.

"Make yourself happy, my dear," said the old lady, when supper was over; "make yourself happy, and go to bed and sleep, and in the morning I will bring your sister to you, fear not."

Miss Betty Danvers herself conducted Viola to a large, luxurious room on the first floor, where there was everything provided for her comfort, including snowy sheets, strewed with lavender. Miss Betty was old-fashioned in her notions. Philip was also invited to remain the night. The ardent lover needed no pressing to induce him to remain near his lady love.

So the night passed, and in the morning a fresh-cheeked maiden waited upon Viola, to assist her in the arrangement of her luxuriant hair, and to provide her with all things necessary. In the dining-room she found handsome Philip Ruthven, attired in his usual dress, and leaning moodily against the mantelshelf. He started when she approached him. His brow was clouded, but it cleared when Viola gave him her hand, and smiled her morning greeting.

"I hope you have slept, sweet Viola?" said the young man.

"And have you?" asked Viola, without stopping to answer his question. "You do not look as if you had slept well, Philip."

He raised her hand to his lips, at her tender and tremulous mention of his name.

"I have not slept," he answered. "The future is very dark to me, Viola. I have been thinking," he went on, speaking with the vehemence which characterized him, "that I have been acting like a wretch, in—daring to pour out to you my love, the tale of my mad passion. I should have suffered in silence, and gone down to the grave with my secret untold. Viola," he went on, passionately, "will you forget, will you promise to forget my presumption—to think of me as a young madman whom your beauty dazzled, and who was hurried into words and actions unworthy of his better feelings?"

There were no tears in the great gray eyes of Ruthven, but they blazed with a gloomy fire. Upon his fair cheek was a hot and hectic spot. He looked on Viola almost with the passionate, regretful eyes wherewith we regard the calm faces of our dead ere they are carried from our sight for ever.

"But why all this, Philip?" asked Lady Viola, who had grown pale as a stately lily; she held her head aloft; she looked upon the young man with sad, scornful eyes. Was he, too, faithless and time serving? Was he afraid of Rokewood, and of consequences, and did he think he might do something better with the four long years that lay between Viola and her majority, than waste them in dancing attendance upon a girl, who might not live to claim her fortune; another heiress might be more ready to his hand, for Viola saw Ruthven with the vision of love, and it seemed to her that numbers of heiresses, young and beautiful, would be delighted to bestow their hands and fortunes on the penniless, nameless student of medicine.

"Why all this?" repeated Viola; "but your silence answers me, sir, and my heart interprets the rest."

There was the oddest, the most measured scorn in the words of Lady Viola.

Philip shaded his eyes with his hands.

"And yet I do not merit your contempt," he murmured. "I was so true, so earnest, I would have died for you."

"It is evident, sir," said Viola, "that whatever your feelings were, they have undergone a change, which—which"—her voice faltered, and threatened to break down—"which wise men of the world can so conveniently bring about, when circumstances look adverse. It is a pity you did not know the conditions of my father's will before you committed yourself, before you were guilty of the weakness of professing a love which it was so inconvenient to continue. I need hardly say, Mr. Ruthven, that this must be our last meeting."

He looked at her with large dilating eyes, eyes full of wonderment, inquiry, wild, and feverish anxiety.

"Tell me, Viola," he said, "does this pain you absolutely. Can you not see that I have been lying awake all the night, thinking of our vast, vast disparity of social rank, my extreme poverty, and your future wealth, of what the world will say of the presumption of the poor starving student, and you—you beautiful, courted, idolised, when the time comes for you to take your place in the gay world—a star of the first magnitude—you will only look upon Ruthven, the student, or the humble practitioner, with pity, or with shame. I have presumed, I have taken unjust advantage of your misfortunes; let me leave you in safety with Miss Danvers, let me wait to see your sister restored to you, then I will go abroad. I will never, never see England again."

There was such concentrated agony in his voice that Viola could not any longer mistake his meaning—a fit of shame and despondency had assailed the soul of Philip like a storm. She approached him, looking into his face, her own brimful of tears, bright and eloquent.

"Philip," she said, "if I were a princess of the blood, and you were standing before me, shoeless and starving, I would raise you to a place beside me. Philip, this is woman's love. I feel it, though in years I am but a girl. If I will not allow my higher sphere to separate me from you, why need your pride rebel? You are a gentleman, Philip; every impulse of your nature is gentle and true. You are my equal in the sight of heaven. If you will not consent to step up beside me," she added, with a smile, "I will step down to you; I will drop my empty-sounding title, I will cease to be the Lady Viola, I will become Mrs. Philip Ruthven! We will live in some sweet nook of Switzerland or Italy; only Norah must live near us."

This was the last misunderstanding that ever passed between these true lovers.

Suddenly, vehemently, passionately, Philip Ruthven caught Viola to his heart, and held her there close, in a poignant ecstasy of gratitude and delight. The step of Miss Betty recalled the lovers to their senses; they sat down and trifled over the breakfast, but each was too happy to have much appetite.

As soon as the footman had carried away the breakfast service, Miss Danvers ordered round her carriage.

"Now, my dear," she said, to Viola, "I leave you here, and I forbid you strictly to quit the house until my return. The servants have strict orders to admit nobody, and you, Mr. Ruthven, must accompany me. I could not for one moment think of leaving you alone with the Lady Viola—prudence is prudence, and etiquette is etiquette."

It was no use for Philip to demur. He drove off with Miss Betty in her close carriage, and Viola was left in the dining-room, in the company of the numerous portraits of the dead and gone Danvers. How the day dragged on its slow length she could not have the patience to reckon. She found a table in the library covered with newspapers and magazines; she tried to read, but her thoughts filled alternately with happy visions of Philip, and anxious, miserable ones of Norah, would not settle upon anything near at hand. The fine September afternoon clouded, the rain came down in the dull, ceaseless pour, which is the wont of Autumn rain. Viola wandered to the room where the portraits were crowded on the walls.

"Oh, when, when would they come, Miss Danvers and Norah, or even Miss Danvers alone, anything better than this intolerable loneliness, this wasting anxiety?"

All at once the bell at the outer gate rang loudly. A servant man with a large waterproof wrapped round him, went through the rain to answer the summons. Soon afterwards a carriage, drawn by two dark brown horses, drove up to the door. Yes, it was Miss Danvers's carriage, now, now, is Norah there? Viola ran out into the hall, where the afternoon shadows of that gloomy day were beginning to darken the antique chairs, and great china vases, and glass cases of stuffed birds. The carriage drew up before the half glass door.

"Is Norah there? oh, is she there?" cried Viola.

The windows of the carriage stained and streaked with rain, were as tear drops on a sorrowful face. The man in the shining waterproof let down the steps. Viola's young heart stood still with suspense.

"Is Norah come?" she called out.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE engineers of France and of England have pronounced against the scheme of a tunnel under the Straits of Dover. They agree that it is feasible, but the cost for the twenty-five miles would be not less than 10,000,000*l.*, and as they are by no means sanguine that so much money could be had, they consider the undertaking out of the question.

Of late the theory has been advanced that earthquakes are caused by the influence of the sun and moon on the internal waves of the earth. A Mr. Rudolf Falb has lately written in defence of this hypothesis, and in order to give a clear proof of its correctness he prophesies that the next earthquakes will occur in equatorial countries on the 6th of September, and the 4th of October.

THE MONT CENIS TUNNEL.—The *Diritto* has the following—"The works for cutting through Mont Cenis are advancing so rapidly, as is shown by the monthly accounts of the progress accomplished, that the tunnel will be completed in 1870, and may be open for traffic at the beginning of 1871. The Italian Ministry of Public Works, having no doubt of that event, has conceded the construction of a line between Susa and the opening of the gallery at Bardonecchia, at the same time imposing the condition that this railway shall be ready at the required moment.

DETERMINATION OF FREE OXYGEN.—At a meeting of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, Mr. Peter Hart described his method of making rapid determinations of free oxygen. The apparatus required consists in addition to an ordinary pneumatic trough, of two tubes, each $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter and 16 inches long, closed to one end. One of the tubes is graduated into 50ths of a cubic inch, and the other is coated internally with phosphorus. This is effected by dropping into the tube a few pieces of phosphorus; it is then to be closed by a sound cork, and the phosphorus (melted by immersing the tube in hot water) may be spread in a thin coating over the interior by turning it round adit cools. On cooling, the cork is to be withdrawn, the tube filled with water, and a piece of india-rubber tube tied securely over the mouth. This completes the apparatus. The *modus operandi* is as follows:—Both tubes are filled with water and allowed to remain in the trough, a portion of the air to be examined is passed into the measuring tube, which is now allowed to remain for five minutes in the trough to allow it to attain the same temperature as the water. It is lifted until the water is at the same level within and without,

and may then be closed by the finger, and withdrawn from the trough. The volume is easily noted. This done, it is connected by the india-rubber joint with the phosphorus tube, into which the air is allowed to flow. The whole may now be placed for half an hour in the trough, when the gas may be poured back into the measuring tube, the level once more taken, and the volume read off in the same way as before.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SENSITIVE FLAMES.

An apparatus has been invented by Barrett for making practical use of sensitive flames. It consists of two perpendicular copper rods, one of which, on its upper end, holds a metallic ribbon, which is composed of thin leaves of gold, silver, or platinum, welded together. Such a ribbon expands unequally under the influence of heat; it bends towards one side, and, in doing so, comes in contact with a fine platinum wire attached to a galvanic battery. As soon as the poles of the battery are closed a bell begins to ring. The working of the apparatus is as follows:

A sensitive flame is lighted, about ten inches from the metallic ribbon. This burns quietly so long as there is no noise, but a shrill whistle, or any unusual disturbance, will cause it to diminish one half in length, and to spread out wide in the middle like the wings of a bird. It thus heats the metallic ribbon, which expands unequally, and occasions the contact of the poles of the battery, which rings a bell.

Such a light as this in a banking-house would betray to the watchman the noise of robbery, and the inventor proposes to use it as a species of burglar alarm. As sound can be transmitted in water four times as rapidly as in the air it is also suggested to employ this method on shipboard to make known the approach of a vessel in time of a fog.

There is probably the germ of curious applications of sensitive flames in Barrett's invention, and it would not be surprising to hear of its use in war, to warn a sentinel of the approach of the enemy, or of its application to a new species of telegraphy.

A NEW DECORATIVE MATERIAL.

THE slowness of painting operations in buildings, the obstruction caused by workmen, and the disagreeable smell from fresh paint, are great inconveniences inherent to the present mode of painting and decorating. To remedy this, M. Jean Marie Lasche, of Strasbourg, Paris, has just patented an invention, the object of which is chiefly to dispense with painting operations in the house or room to be decorated, and to prepare the painting at a factory or shop, so that it can be applied to walls or other surfaces by ordinary hangers or layers, without giving rise to disagreeable smells. The invention consists in producing the painting upon tin foil. M. Lasche takes thin tin foil, which possesses great flexibility, and spreads it upon glass, taking care to damp the glass in order to facilitate the spreading and retention of the foil.

The foil thus spread constitutes a very smooth surface, on which the inventor paints or colours in oil, either plain or ornamental, as on walls or wainscots. It is allowed to dry, and is then varnished. This portable painting, when removed from the glass with its lining of tin, is ready to be applied in a house or otherwise. This new covering or hanging is wound on rollers like paper hangings, but it differs from them, inasmuch as the colouring or painting is on tin and in oil; the back or tin lining constitutes a waterproof surface, and the tin, owing to its great flexibility, can be adapted to the configuration of all mouldings or irregularities. Before applying the tin hanging or covering, a waterproof mixture is spread on the wall or surface to be decorated, and the hanging is then cut and applied, being made to follow the irregularities of the mouldings and ornaments.

This tin covering may also replace gilding, the gold being applied on the tin foil with the ordinary preparation. It is dried and cut, and after having had a waterproof mixture spread on the ornaments or surface to be decorated, the pieces of tin gilding are applied to them. The advantage of this tin gilding over ordinary gilding on metals is that it does not oxidize, while ordinary gilding on metals soon becomes spotted or tarnished. This invention thus constitutes, as it were, a new process of decorative painting, which dispenses with all labour at the place of application, except simple hanging or laying. We have by us some samples of this new material, which are exceedingly appropriate and effective.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.—On their return from Germany the Prince and Princess of Wales will occupy Gunton Hall, the seat of Lord Suffield, for a short time. Lord Suffield is about to cruise in his yacht in the Mediterranean, his lordship's health being somewhat indifferent.



[MASTER GEOFFREY'S PORTRAIT.]

THE HAMPTON MYSTERY.

CHAPTER XVI.

I stand as one upon a rock,
Environ'd with a wilderness of sea,
Who marks the wasting tide grow wave by wave,
Expecting ever when some envious surge
Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.

Shakespeare.

GIRALDA was conducted to the housekeeper's room, where, for the next hour, she was left to solitude and her own thoughts. At the end of the period mentioned, Mrs. Plumptre returned, breathing heavily as if from over-exertion, and announced that the young lady's chamber was in readiness.

"Your travelling bag has been carried up, miss," she said. "Have you no other luggage?"

"Not here," replied the young girl, arising.

The maiden's manner was reticent, and the housekeeper forbore to press her inquiries. She, therefore, led the way in silence to Giralda's apartment. They entered the wide hall of the main edifice. It had a strangely dismantled look, being totally bare of furniture. They ascended the grand staircase, their step echoing hollowly, and gained the upper hall, which was but a counterpart of the lower.

"My lord has had the carpets taken up and the furniture put away, there being no company now—days at the park," said the housekeeper, apologetically, as she conducted the maiden to a chamber opening off the hall. "This is your room, miss."

She flung open a door near the head of the stairs, and ushered Giralda into an apartment, herself following.

The room was wide and high, almost square in shape. It had a wide window looking to the east, and a magnificent oriel fronting the south, so that all the light and sunshine of the outer world seemed to concentrate here. The walls were adorned with pictures. A wood fire burned and sparkled in the ample old-fashioned fireplace, giving to the air a delightful temperature.

In an alcove stood a high, four-post bedstead, heaped with lace-frilled pillows. A dressing-table, draped with pink muslin and white lace, its mirror framed in a cloud of rosy drapery, stood in one corner. A Turkish lounge and an easy chair comprised the luxuries of the apartment, but they were old and threadbare, as was also the Turkey carpet, whose bright hues even time and wear had not been able to efface.

"What a pleasant room!" exclaimed Giralda, ad-

vancing to the oriel window and looking across the lawn to the park, where the trees were waving like billows in the restless March wind. The housekeeper's worn face brightened.

"I am glad you like it, miss," she answered. "I suppose my lord may be displeased when he finds what room I have given you, but Lord Adlowe has the blue chamber, and his valet had to have the next chamber, instead of lodging among the servants, where he belongs, and the rest of the rooms are stripped of furniture. My lord had the carpets and furniture boxed up years ago. This room he never had touched, and he hasn't entered it for nearly eighteen years."

"Doesn't he like it?" asked Giralda, wonderingly.

The housekeeper hesitated. Something in the young girl's appearance seemed to invite her confidence.

"It—it was Mr. Geoffrey's room," she whispered. Giralda shivered.

"Mr. Geoffrey's," she repeated; "the landlord at the 'Trevalyan Arms' told me about him. He tried to murder and rob his uncle."

The housekeeper's face flushed, and her eyes sparkled with sudden feeling.

"He was caught in his uncle's room, miss, at midnight, a knife in his hand. His confusion and bewilderment, added to his situation, seemed to fix the intention of an awful crime upon him. But I know he never meant to harm his uncle. Lord Trevalyan was harsh with him, and kept him upon a short allowance of money, but Geoffrey Trevalyan was incapable of harming a hair of the old man's head. There is some mystery about that night's affair, and when that mystery is unravelled, Geoffrey's name will be cleared. He was the noblest, the brightest, the gayest of boys, Miss Arevalo. He had a kind word and a smile for everyone. The girls blushed when handsome Mr. Geoffrey's blue eyes chanced to fall upon them, and the old folks came to him with all their troubles. He nursed his uncle through a contagious fever, when everyone else forsook him, and he saved my son's life from drowning. That was the man, Miss Arevalo, whom they accuse of robbery and attempted murder."

"Was there any doubt of his guilt?" asked Giralda.

"No one doubted it but me," said Mrs. Plumptre, sorrowfully. "I was his old nurse; and I knew him better than the rest. I knew him to be incapable of crime. The servants and villagers doubt his guilt even now. The poor boy was betrothed to a great lady—an earl's daughter, the Lady Beatrice Hampton. But they all turned from him when my lord died. And my boy—my nursing, my noble

young master—fled off to Brazil, and died there. So it is said, Miss Arevalo. It is well that he is thought dead, for my lord would hunt the earth over for him if he believed he lived. My lord loved the boy in his inmost heart, with more than a father's love. Master Geoffrey's supposed ingratitude seems to have turned that love to hatred. No one but me knows how my lord worshipped his gay and handsome heir. But now, he would kill him with his own hands, if he were to meet him."

"You speak as if his death were not proven," remarked Giralda.

The housekeeper bestowed upon the maiden a swift, keen glance.

Her honest face was full of emotion. Her manner was full of secrecy and mystery.

Having read Giralda's pure and noble soul in her face, she glanced apprehensively at the door, and said, in a low tone:

"Miss Arevalo, since the day Master Geoffrey went away, my lord has shut himself up, seeing no visitors, excepting his nephew, Lord Adlowe. Once in a while he goes up to London, but not often. He will not let me speak favourably of my young master; and no one else cares to urge Master Geoffrey's innocence. I suppose no one but me really believes in it. Your coming here is a remarkable event. Perhaps your innocent ways may soften my lord's heart. Perhaps your blue eyes—so like Master Geoffrey's—may touch his hardened soul. I don't know why I speak so freely to you, miss, but I beg of you now to use your influence in behalf of my young master. Lord Trevalyan has taken a fancy to you already, I can see. For the sake of right and justice, I entreat you to speak a good word, now and then, for Master Geoffrey. He will hearken to you sooner than to me, for I am old and humble, and you are young, beautiful, and a lady. Besides, you have Master Geoffrey's eyes, and my lord loved those gay and innocent eyes."

The housekeeper spoke entreatingly, her manner full of suppressed eagerness.

"I fear I can do nothing to help you, Mrs. Plumptre," said Giralda, with a sigh. "Is it well to stir up these old things? I feel interested in poor Mr. Geoffrey, and I shall like to believe him innocent, whatever the proofs against him. But he is dead, Mrs. Plumptre. Why not let the story of his past die, too?"

The housekeeper again glanced apprehensively towards the door.

"They said Master Geoffrey died," she whispered. "They sent home the proofs. I believed the story, miss, and many a night I've cried all night, thinking

of a lonely grave. My son is a sailor, miss, and last year he went to a big place down there in Brazil. I charged him to find Master Geoffrey's grave, and to put up a marble headstone. I sent the money for the stone out of my own earnings. My son looked, but he could not find the grave. He applied to the Spaniard, at whose house Master Geoffrey was said to have died, and he found, after promising not to injure the fellow, that the story of Master Geoffrey's death was not true—that he did not die in Brazil."

Giralda uttered an exclamation of surprise. "My son discovered," continued the housekeeper, her agitation increasing, "that Master Geoffrey left there for the West Indies; my young master may be living still, Miss Arevalo. Sometimes I even fancy he may be in England. If my lord should discover that he is not dead, he would set a detective at once upon his track, and not rest until he had sent him to penal servitude. Now, my dear—Miss Arevalo, I mean—will you not help me to soften my lord's heart towards his nephew? If my young master should live—should be in England—"

Her voice failed her. She could only look her agonised pleading.

"I will try to help you, Mrs. Plumpton," said Giralda, with gentle kindness. "If I were only sure that the young man was guiltless of the crime with which he was charged. But he could not be innocent! How came he in his uncle's chamber at midnight, a knife in his hand, unless he meant to kill him? The landlady of the 'Trevalyan Arms,' told me that Mr. Geoffrey actually stabbed his uncle in the shoulder. I cannot plead for an intended murderer, except to beg that Lord Trevalyan will forgive the wrong as he hopes to be forgiven his errors."

The housekeeper groaned, and twisted her hands nervously together.

Suddenly an idea occurred to her. She sprang up and moved towards a picture, which had already attracted Giralda's attention from the fact that its face was turned to the wall. Reversing the picture, Mrs. Plumpton exclaimed:

"There is Master Geoffrey's portrait, painted only a short time before he left home. Look at it, Miss Arevalo, and tell me if you think he could have been guilty of attempted murder?"

Giralda approached the picture, and looked at it steadily. It was that of a youth of one and twenty, with a fair boyish face, fair hair of a rare golden tint, a frank and pleasant mouth, and dark, sunny blue eyes, full of the brightness of a joyous soul. They were truthful, honest eyes, radiant and resolute, yet with a strange tenderness lying in their blue depths.

Those eyes had a strange fascination for Giralda. She did not know how like her own eyes were to them. It seemed to her that her father was looking at her from behind a blonde mask.

"Do you think the owner of that face could have committed or designed to commit murder?" demanded the housekeeper.

"No, no," cried Giralda, almost involuntarily, "I should as soon suspect my own father of a crime. My father's eyes are very like those, only graver and more sorrowful; but papa is dark and his hair is black. He is a Spaniard. Mr. Geoffrey has papa's eyes, and I will do my best, Mrs. Plumpton, to influence Lord Trevalyan in his nephew's favour. When I look at that picture, it almost seems to me that I shall be working for papa—my own darling father," she added, softly, under her breath.

The housekeeper failed to catch the last sentence, but she seemed overjoyed at the maiden's promise, and was profuse in her thanks.

"It may seem strange to you, miss, that I should ask you, a perfect stranger to take this interest in our family affairs, but I can get no one to speak a word for my poor young master. And every day I dread lest he should have come back to England, and be discovered. Do not tell my lord that his nephew possibly lives, Miss Arevalo. Wait until he shows some sign of softening towards Master Geoffrey. He is an awful man in his rages—terrible!"

And Mrs. Plumpton shuddered. "If you can only make him think differently of poor Mr. Geoffrey. Everyone has tried to influence him against him—everyone but me."

She lingered to give a few more injunctions to the young girl, whose promised aid filled her faithful heart with hope, and then withdrew, having promised to send up the maiden's luncheon at the proper hour.

Left alone, Giralda looked long and earnestly at the portrait of Geoffrey Trevalyan, which smiled down upon her with tender, familiar eyes.

"I will work for Mr. Geoffrey," she said, aloud, her face kindling with resolution. "It will almost seem to me that I am working for papa," she added, unconsciously repeating what she had said before. "I will try to fancy that I am doing it for papa's

sake," and she smiled faintly at the very absurdity of the idea.

Turning reluctantly from the portrait, she proceeded to make her toilette for the afternoon. Her dusky hair, smoothly brushed, clustered in tiny rings close to her small head. Her black silk dress, with linen bands at throat and wrist, the former fastened by a bow of cherry ribbon, completed an attire which she deemed eminently suitable to Lord Trevalyan's companion and secretary. As she turned from the mirror she almost wished that the childlike face bore the stamp of age, and the smooth brow was furrowed with wrinkles, for she looked, in her own eyes, altogether too young and undignified for her present position in life.

She was standing in the oriel window, thinking sorrowfully of the home and friends she had left, when a small handmaiden entered, bearing a tray on which was spread a delicate luncheon.

"If you please, miss," she said, with a courtesy, having deposited her burden upon a table, "my lord will be pleased to see you in his room as soon as you have finished luncheon. He has got one of his tantrums bad, miss, with the gout in his foot, and he bade me tell you something about Saul and David, miss, which I've forgotten. But leastways, miss, he wants you to sing to him."

"I will come down very soon," replied Giralda. "You need not stay to wait upon me," she added, with a smile that won the heart of the small maid at once and for ever.

The housekeeper's assistant, too young to be counted among the family servants, withdrew in a state of ardent admiration for the new inmate; and Giralda ate her tempting lunch in solitude.

Convinced that she had taken a right course, she resolutely repressed her rising home-sickness, and nerved herself for the duties before her. Despite his faults, she was already interested in Lord Trevalyan. Despite the evidence against him, she had imbibed the housekeeper's faith in Geoffrey Trevalyan, and she was determined to use her influence in his favour—supposing that she should gain any influence over the vindictive marquis. Her new duties had already a charm for her, and she felt a certain sense of responsibility just heavy enough to be pleasant.

Having finished her luncheon, she set out for the lower rooms of the eastern wing.

On the stairs she encountered Negwyn, Lord Adlowe's valet, and, to her surprise, the man halted and stared at her with an earnestness that embarrassed her.

The sight of that strangely lovely face and graceful figure at Trevalyan Park aroused all the wonder and curiosity of the returned Australian.

Giralda, unconscious that he, too, had marked the strange likeness between her eyes and those of Geoffrey Trevalyan, passed on and gained the corridor from which Lord Trevalyan's apartments opened. She knocked lightly, and the marquis himself bade her enter.

Obedying the summons, she went in. Lord Trevalyan was alone. His chair had been wheeled near the hearth, and he was amusing himself with the destruction of the great number of letters which his recent advertisement had called into existence.

He paused in his task as the young girl entered his presence, his countenance expressing his surprise and gratification at the bright apparition.

"You are prompt, Miss Arevalo," he said, "I did not expect you for an hour yet. I supposed ladies spent hours over their toilettes. Perhaps the race is improving; it is quite time. Just draw your chair up to me, if you please. I shall have to defer the song I had promised myself until my nephew departs."

Giralda drew a chair to the position indicated, and the old marquis looked at her pure face keenly.

"My nephew, Lord Adlowe, knows you are come," he said, "I told him myself. He says you are an adventuresome, Miss Arevalo, to answer my advertisement in person. But I am a keener judge of people than my travelled nephew. You are an unworried innocent, unsuspecting little creature—a mere child—and I mean that you shall be treated here with the respect which would be given my grandchild, if I had one. No one can say aught against your residence here, since Mrs. Plumpton will matronise you. Her presence is sufficient for the proprieties, although an old invalid like me ought not to be a subject for gossiping tongues. You shall be my secretary, Miss Arevalo. I like the name better than that of 'nurse,' or 'companion.' And it shall be understood that, while my roof shelters you, I will watch over your reputation and welfare with the jealous care of a father."

He spoke with an impressive earnestness that touched the brave little heart of the maiden.

"I thank you, my lord," she said, simply, but

with a look that spoke better than words. "I don't know much about the world, but I am sure it must be right for me to help myself, and relieve mamma of my support."

"The world," said the marquis, with an ironical curve of his lip, "is a den of wolves. A lamb like you has but small chance in it. But then, thank fortune, there are few lambs. Don't let me frighten you, child. No one shall harm you. Ah!" he added, as he heard a stop without, "here comes a wolf, now."

The next moment the door opened, and his nephew, Lord Adlowe, entered the parlour.

He came forward smiling, the same polished nobleman who had induced the Lady Beatrice Hampton to consider his claims upon her hand. Innocent little Giralda, while she instinctively disliked him, wondered why his uncle called him a wolf.

"Well, my gallant corsair, I suppose you are soon to be off," said the marquis. "Miss Arevalo, this gentleman is my nephew, Lord Adlowe."

Giralda acknowledged the introduction with a graceful bow. Lord Adlowe forgot his politeness sufficiently to stare at her in undisguised amazement, mingled with admiration for her rare beauty.

"She has Geoffrey Trevalyan's eyes," he muttered, uneasily.

"Ormond," said the marquis, significantly, his black eyes glittering with sudden sternness, "Miss Arevalo is my secretary. While she remains at the Park, she will be to me as a daughter. You will look upon her in that light."

Lord Adlowe bowed, his face flushing. He knew, what the innocent Giralda did not suspect, that those simple words contained a warning to him not to look too admiringly upon the young stranger. He sat down by the table, his face in shadow, and watched with furtive glances the newcomer. He did not like her resemblance to the cousin he supposed dead. He had a vague sense of uneasiness whenever he chanced to encounter her innocent gaze.

"The carriage is ordered, and I suppose I must go, uncle," he said, consulting his watch. "I wish now that I had not decided to go to the Hampton ball. I would rather remain here—"

"No doubt!" exclaimed the marquis, with keen sarcasm. "I understand you perfectly, my dear Ormond. I am delighted with your sudden affection, the more especially as you betrayed nothing similar to it during your years of absence in the East. But it is your duty to go to this ball. Lord Hampton is anxious to unite the fortunes of Trevalyan and Hampton, and I am no less anxious to see the union accomplished. Go then, my dear boy, I shall be down in London later in the season, and we can then renew our affectionate intercourse."

"You act as if you had no faith in me or my professions!" cried Lord Adlowe, with sudden heat.

"Well, I have none, and you know I have none," replied the marquis, coolly. "I have no faith in anyone, unless in this child here. She isn't old enough to be deceitful. But faith isn't necessary to my enjoyment of your professions, Ormond. They amuse me, they do, indeed."

Lord Adlowe scowled darkly.

"I hear the carriage," he said, hastily. "I have but time to catch the train. Good bye, uncle. Adieu, Miss Arevalo."

He bowed to the latter and shook hands with the former, an operation to which the marquis submitted with a grimace. Then he hastened from the room and house, muttering, as he entered the waiting carriage:

"There's some mystery about this girl. I mean to solve it. By Jove, she's a beauty, and as innocent as a dove. Strange that her eyes are so like Geoffrey's. I must inquire into her history. I'll be back up here next week, and see what I can find out from her."

CHAPTER XVII.

When the laugh is lightest,
When wildest goes the jest,
When gleams the goblet brightest,
And proudest heaves thy breast,
A ghost shall glide amid the flowers.

Mrs. Osgood.

THE face of Giralda, so lovely, so arch, so spirituelle, haunted the soul of Lord Adlowe, as he travelled back to town. Not even the occasional remarks of his valet, Negwyn, whom he chose to have in the same compartment with himself, could drive from his thoughts the large, changeful, violet eyes of the maiden—those eyes which so strangely recalled to his memory his cousin, whom he believed buried in the far distant Brazil. His interest in his uncle's newly-engaged secretary became a positive uneasiness, and again and again he promised himself a speedy return

to Trevalyan Park, and a thorough and secret investigation of the history of Gerald.

"Pshaw! I am nervous!" he thought, turning his face from the gaze of his attendant. "Because that girl has the eyes of my most hated enemy—dead before she was born—I am troubled and oppressed like one whom some danger threatens. What danger can threaten me? I shall be the next Lord Trevalyan—the next owner of all the Trevalyan estates, which, thanks to the miserliness of the present lord, are more than princely. No one can come between me and that vast wealth—no one, unless the dead should rise from his grave. But Geoffrey is dead! I am a lunatic to doubt it, as I do sometimes in my gloomy hours! If he were not dead—if the proofs of his death had been cleverly manufactured to deceive us all—I could kill him with my own hands!"

And Lord Adlowe's face darkened wickedly.

"But my momentary suspicion is childish and foolish. If Geoffrey had been living during the last eighteen years, while we believed him dead, he would have communicated the fact of his continued existence to the lady he so passionately worshipped—the Lady Beatrice Hampton. Can he have done so?" and a keen light leaped to his eyes. "Can this be the secret of her celibacy, at which all her fashionable friends have wondered? Can this be the mystery of her life?"

He pondered over the question, bringing all the energies of his mind to its solution.

His face glowed and changed; his eyes grew dull and full of light by turns, but still his busy brain had not solved the question so important to his welfare, and still his busy mind reverted to it.

"How was it possible such a plan could have been," he thought. "Geoffrey knew my uncle's vindictive hatred of him. How easy it would have been for him to pretend having died, and then lie off in safety somewhere, and wait for Lord Trevalyan's death! He may have deceived us all cleverly. While I have wandered abroad, thinking myself secure, Geoffrey, securely hidden somewhere, may have been laughing to think how easily he duped us all. I must look into this matter closely. Perhaps the detective whom I set to watch the Lady Beatrice Hampton may be able to throw some light on all this mystery."

"What is it troubles you, and makes you scowl so darkly, my lord?" asked Negwyn, breaking the silence, and speaking familiarly.

"Don't talk to me, Negwyn," said his lordship, impatiently. "I want to think."

"Of the blue-eyed Spanish girl back at the park?" suggested the valet, still more familiarly. "The lady secretary of Lord Trevalyan—the girl with poor Geoffrey Trevalyan's eyes?"

His lordship started.

"You saw her, then?" he questioned. "You noticed the resemblance?"

"It fairly forced itself upon me," declared the valet. "His eyes were of the same dark, deep blue, and as full of lights and shadows, and with the same innocent and joyous expression. If Geoffrey Trevalyan had been the father of a daughter, she might have had eyes like these. She has the Trevalyan features, too."

"I noticed that, also!" said his lordship, with agitation. "What can it mean?"

"I mean, my lord, that you must be on your guard—as watchful as a tiger," responded the valet. "The girl has, perhaps, unknown to herself, Trevalyan blood in her veins. It is plain that she did not inherit those eyes from Geoffrey Trevalyan; yet, if your lordship will take my advice you will find out her whole history, and that soon."

"I will," exclaimed Lord Adlowe. "I had already made that resolve."

His lordship sank into a silence, which lasted during the remainder of the journey. Strange thoughts and schemes took possession of his mind. Strange fears and anxieties swept over his guilt-laden soul. He seemed to himself to have just awakened from a dream. The possibility that his cousin still lived, despite the apparent proofs of his death, and was hiding somewhere until the death of Lord Trevalyan, when Geoffrey would come forward and claim both title and estates, gathered force the longer he dwelt upon it. Yet again and again he assured himself that, though such a thing were possible, it was by no means probable.

The train swept in and out of the stations along the route, setting down and taking up passengers, but the privacy of Lord Adlowe and his valet was not infringed upon. They dashed with easy speed over the pleasant fields, through parks, plantations, and hamlets, but neither Lord Adlowe nor

his companion looked from the windows, or seemed conscious of the outside world.

London was reached just at nightfall. The shadows had settled down upon the wet and slippery streets, and the light of the gas lamps wavered in the watery, foggy atmosphere. Securing a cab, Adlowe and his valet drove to their hotel.

Their return having been expected, the rooms were brightened with fire and lights. Sinking into an easy chair, and shivering with an effeminacy he liked to affect, Adlowe ordered his valet to ring for tea. The order was obeyed, and Negwyn proceeded to lay out his master's evening toilette.

His lordship partook of his tea when it was brought, sat awhile before his fire in concentrated thought, and then proceeded to dress for the event which had hurried him back to town—the Hampton ball.

His toilette was a work of care and time. It was completed at last, however, to his complete satisfaction, and he resumed his seat by the fire.

He had scarcely done so, when a knock sounded on the door. In reply to his bidding, Rush, the detective, entered his presence.

Lord Adlowe welcomed him with an eager, joyful look.

"Well, Rush," he said, pointing to a chair, "What luck? Have you discovered anything? I have had no news from you during my stay at the park."

The detective bowed and took the proffered seat, with a face blanker even than usual. He had a disappointed air, which his employer presently marked.

"I had nothing to write, my lord," he replied, with ill-concealed chagrin. "You set me about this business on Tuesday evening. This is Thursday evening. I have kept a close watch on Hampton House during this interval. All of Wednesday—yesterday—the curtains of the boudoir of the Lady Beatrice Hampton were drawn open, but there was no other sign that the room was occupied, except that once or twice I fancied I saw a maid peeping out. Last evening, however, I did see the Lady Beatrice looking out of the same window, and awhile later she went out to some ball or party with her father, Lord Hampton."

Lord Adlowe's face brightened.

"When did her ladyship return home?" he asked, eagerly.

The detective shook his head.

"I don't know," he acknowledged. "If her ladyship was absent from Hampton House at all, as your lordship believes, she has completely hoodwinked me. If she was absent at all, she must have disguised herself greatly. In that case, she must have some extraordinary secret—some strange mystery to conceal."

Lord Adlowe's countenance fell.

"Who went out and in after you began your watch, and before you saw her ladyship?" he asked.

"There was a stream of callers during yesterday, who came and went in their carriages," replied the detective, chafed at Adlowe's impatient tone. "Everyone who called went away again. The servants went out and in by their entrance, and they had also a plenty of visitors on both Tuesday and last evenings. I watched three or four smart maids last night, and an old bent woman with a poke bonnet, a relative of one of the servants, who called at Hampton House soon after dark, say an hour or so. I waited for her to come out again, which she did, and I even followed her a little way, and contrived to look at her feet and hands. There was no disguise about them. They were the feet and hands of a working woman. The hands were bare, and I saw that they were as brown as they were coarse."

"You seem to have bestowed considerable attention upon an old woman," said Lord Adlowe. "It would be almost impossible for the Lady Beatrice Hampton to disguise her stately and haughty carriage."

"Her ladyship is an extraordinary woman," observed the detective gravely. "I have discovered that much, my lord. I have the reputation of being keen and sharp, but I acknowledge that her ladyship was keen as myself. But I am patient. If it is your wish, Lord Adlowe, to prosecute this secret investigation, I am willing to go on with it. But would it not be better for you to drop it?"

"And why so?"

The detective hesitated a moment, then responded:

"Her ladyship has a secret. A secret guarded with such extraordinary precautions and mystery, might, perhaps, better be concealed, my lord!"

"I shall not proclaim it to the world if I discover

it, Rush," declared his lordship. "It is my right, as the accepted lover of the Lady Beatrice Hampton, to probe into her secrets and mysteries. You must not be discouraged or daunted by this little failure at the outset. A little patience will set you on the right track. Women are not beings of caution and foresight. The Lady Beatrice will betray herself in some manner to your sharp eyes."

"I will sharpen my wits," said the detective, quietly. "I will not be outwitted by a woman, whatever her rank and station. I will keep an eye on every person who enters or leaves the house, whether servant or visitor. Next time I come my report will not be so barren, my lord."

Lord Adlowe expressed a hope that it would not, and conversed at some length with Rush, communicating to him his thoughts as to the continued existence of his cousin, Geoffrey Trevalyan.

"Such a thing is possible," admitted the detective, "but scarcely probable. Mr. Trevalyan must have changed greatly from the gay, thoughtless boy, for he was a little more, to conceive and execute such an elaborate deception as that of the proofs of his death—if it were a deception. Yet, as I said the thing is possible. I will redouble my vigilance in regard to the Lady Beatrice," he added arising. "If Geoffrey Trevalyan lives, the Lady Beatrice is aware of the fact. If he lives, we must discover the secret by watching her ladyship's movements, granting that her ladyship preserves her former attachment to him."

No compunction stirred the breast of the detective, and no sense of shame was connected by him with his office of spy. It was his business to discover secrets and probe mysteries. He regarded his present employment in a business light, and his professional pride and ardour were engaged in the task he had undertaken. The possibility that Geoffrey Trevalyan still lived lent a peculiar charm to the task. He beheld in the distance, in the event of his entire success, which success involved the discovery and bringing to justice of the supposed dead Geoffrey Trevalyan, fame and fortune. After a few farther remarks, the detective took his leave, and Adlowe resumed his meditations. He was aroused at last by the return of his valet, who had left the room previous to the appearance of the detective. Lord Adlowe debated within himself for a few moments, but reflecting that he could fully trust his confederate, whose interests he had made identical with his own, and also reflecting that he might require his valet's services in the matter, he made known to him his secret discoveries at Hampton House, and added:

"I would like you to get acquainted with the servants of Hampton House, Negwyn, and learn what you can. If you can find out any clue that will help the detective, in regard to her ladyship's absences, I will add five hundred pounds to the sum already promised you, to be paid when I become Lord Trevalyan."

The valet's eyes sparkled, and he promised to engage in the pursuit with heart and soul.

"I'll earn the five hundred pounds, my lord," he said, his eyes gleaming. "You are a better paymaster than I could find elsewhere, and I mean to be faithful to you. As a first step, I'll make the acquaintance of the maids at Hampton House this very night."

Adlowe smiled as he saw how completely his ally had dismissed his late remorseful thoughts, and how thoroughly he had begun to identify himself with his employer's interests.

"Be faithful to me," he said, "and I shall know how to reward you. Be treacherous, and I shall know how to punish!"

The evil flash that darted like lightning from his eyes gave a sinister emphasis to his words, and caused an involuntary shiver to creep over the form of the valet, who hastened to protest his devotion and faithfulness.

His lordship arose smiling, gave a few touches to his toilette, and putting on his hat, descended to the waiting cab, and set out for the ball.

Hampton House was like a gigantic lantern, as he drew up before its richly-carpeted steps. Lights blazed from every window, and streamed out upon the porch and into the street a light almost as bright as that of day. Soft strains of music floated out to him, bearing a burden of most exquisite melody, and sweet notes of laughter mingled with the music.

He hurried up to the dressing-room, and speedily descended to the drawing-room, passing under royal arches of exotic flowers. Every niche on the grand staircase was a wilderness of fragrant blossoms. The white statues were wreathed with floral garlands,

whose vivid hues contrasted strangely with the gleaming marble.

In the drawing-room, under a canopy of hot-house flowers, stood the hostess, the queenly Lady Beatrice Hampton. Her father was beside her, beaming with pride and joy at the superb beauty of his daughter.

He might well forget his secret disquiet, and feel proud of her that evening. She was actually radiant. It was not the soft radiance which characterised her during her happy other life at the Laurels, but the glittering loveliness of the courted belle and queen of society. Fair and white as marble, her ebony hair glittering with jewels, her eyes glowing, her scarlet lips wreathed with welcoming smiles, she was an ideal goddess—a splendid, magnificent woman.

She was dressed in amber *moiré*, and wore the famous Hampton diamonds in full profusion. Her figure looked its stateliest, but she had unbent sufficiently from her usual haughtiness to give a strange and witching charm to her manner.

"She looks like a crowned empress," thought Lord Adlowe, making his way to her. "How gloriously beautiful she is. How graciously she receives. She will be a magnificent Lady Trevalyan. She shall be mine!"

He strengthened the vow with an inward oath.

He made his greetings. The Lady Beatrice received him as she did all others, and without especial show of pleasure, and he passed on to the earl, who welcomed him with a hearty handshaking, and an inquiry after the health of Lord Trevalyan.

The inquiry answered, a few compliments uttered, and Lord Adlowe passed on; joining the glittering and fashionable throng, most of the members of which he had not seen since his return from his wanderings.

His affectedly foreign air, and his long absence, made him at once a lion. Stately dowagers welcomed him home to England, and, with playful taps of jewelled fans, accused him of "naughtiness" in having remained away so long. The younger ladies received his gallant and indiscriminate attentions with smiles and blushes, calling to mind the many stories they had heard of his romantic adventures in the East, and the white-cravated beaus finding themselves of less interest than usual to the fickle dames, revenged themselves and flattered Adlowe's already inordinate vanity by regarding him coldly and jealously.

It was more than an hour before Lord Adlowe found opportunity to seek again the Lady Beatrice.

As he approached her, he noticed that a slight shade of weariness had appeared on her statuesque face. The saloons had now become thronged, and the arrivals were fewer and farther between.

Adlowe seized the opportunity thus afforded by offering his arm to her ladyship. She accepted the courtesy with a haughty grace, and the two began the promenade of the long rooms.

At one side of the mansion, running the whole length of the double drawing-rooms, was the large and magnificent conservatory. It was a glass palace, with great central dome and long wings. In the wings were gathered the triumphs of horticulture, tropical plants, feathery palm-trees, whose plumed crests brushed the glittering roof; banks of lovely roses of every dye and shade of fragrance; orchids in variety, their strange loveliness in full perfection; the sacred *espíritu-santo* of Mexico, and even the black roses, which are the triumph of English gardening, but which seem a libel on roses in general.

Under the great crystal dome, surrounded by a distant circle of orange trees in full blossom, and riotous with fragrance, was a grand fountain. A colossal marble Flora stood poised daintily upon a rock in the centre of the basin, crowned and garlanded with flowers, and looking down upon two lovely sea nymphs, who were sporting at her feet and tossing up spray with their gleaming hands. Upon the waters of the great basin floated lotus blossoms, and delicately-tinted water lilies, and lovely swaying mosses, and those seemed to have been scattered by the prodigal hands of the marble Flora.

The conservatory was brilliantly lighted in every part. Glazed sliding doors connected it with both drawing-rooms. Other glazed doors, wide open, led, by marble steps, upon the green terrace of the narrow strip of lawn without.

As yet, the conservatory remained almost unoccupied. It was not time for tired dancers to seek its cool and fragrant recesses; nor for lovers to leave the general company.

It was to this spot, after a lengthened promenade, that Lord Adlowe conducted the Lady Beatrice.

His manner was respectful and deferential, with just a suspicion of lover-like ardour in it. He was too polite to make himself disagreeable to her ladyship by ardent protestations and manifestations of devotion. He meant, to use a phrase he thought expressive, to play his cards cleverly, and win the game.

He led her ladyship to a seat under an orange tree, which seemed weighted with snowy blossoms, and which idly dropped now and then a white and fragrant petal among the diamonds of the Lady Beatrice and on her trailing robe, and proceeded to compliment her upon her appearance, the fashionable assembly, the beauty of her flowers, and, finally, upon the presence of the heir apparent to the crown in her lofty saloons.

The Lady Beatrice listened coldly, wearily; her thoughts had strayed from that scene of gaiety, from the false and hollow existence, as the unmarried belle, to the sunny love-lit home at the Laurels, and the nobler, better, happier life she led within those humble walls.

Unconsciously her proud face softened, a dewy light replaced the glitter of her eyes, and a smile so rare, so sweet, so bewildering, as to startle Lord Adlowe, hovered about her perfect lips.

His lordship fancied he had called that smile into being. He was about to utter some rapturous, lover-like remark, when a rustle was heard at the open door near them—the door that gave on the smooth terrace—and a woman's hand, coarse and brown, as the detective had described it, was waved from the shadows of a thick growing shrub.

But Lord Adlowe saw the hand, so did Lady Beatrice, starting, and becoming herself again.

The next movement a head looked out from behind the shrub, the head of Mrs. Fleck, her ladyship's seamstress, and confidential attendant.

Lord Adlowe recognised it, having seen it often in former years.

"My lady!" whispered the woman, her face white with ill-repressed agitation, her manner indicative of some great trouble. "Will you come to the door a moment?"

Without apology to Lord Adlowe, and with a look of sudden apprehension, the Lady Beatrice arose and obeyed the summons, going to the door.

The woman stood on the marble steps, still striving to keep in the shadow of the shrub that her mistress might not read her features.

Lord Adlowe, conscious that something of more than usual importance was occurring, crept nearer the door, ostensibly gathering a bouquet.

"What is it?" he heard the Lady Beatrice whisper, with sudden sharpness of intonation, "What is wrong, Mary?"

"Come up to your own rooms, my lady," he heard the woman reply, in a faltering, trembling undertone, "I have news for you, Meggy is here."

The Lady Beatrice caught her breath sharply, and Lord Adlowe saw that her face had blanched to the whiteness of death, and that an awful, shuddering fear looked from her dark eyes.

The next moment, forgetful of his presence, her ladyship caught the hand of her servant, hurried along the terrace, and entered the mansion by a retired and private door, by which she might gain unobserved by anyone her own apartments.

Lord Adlowe stared after her in astonishment.

"Here is more mystery," he muttered. "Who is Meggy? Where does she come from? What was there in the fact of her sudden arrival to so startle the Lady Beatrice? It is another clue, at any rate. I must follow it up."

CHAPTER XVIII.

No future hour can rend my heart like this,
Save that which breaks it. *Malwin.*

THE Lady Beatrice entered her own apartments through those of her seamstress, and hurried into her dressing-room, strangely oppressed with a heavy foreboding of evil.

She was not reassured by the sight of the figure that met her startled gaze.

Meggy Fleck, the housekeeper and nurse of the Laurels, was crouching before the red fire, her face buried in her hands, her attitude that of utter and almost hopeless misery.

The Lady Beatrice sprang to her, and caught her arm in the fierceness of sudden terror.

"What is it?" she gasped. "My husband—"

Meggy Fleck slowly arose from her crouching position, and turned her face up to that of her mistress.

How that face had changed since the Lady Beatrice had looked upon it last.

Its freshness and ruddiness were gone. The cheeks

that had been so smooth were seamed with lines cut by heavy grief. The eyes were dim with weeping, and set in dark and cavernous sockets. The whole countenance was wretchedly haggard.

The Lady Beatrice stepped back involuntarily. "My husband?" she repeated, with a low wail.

"He is well, my lady," replied Meggy Fleck, in a hollow voice, striving to speak calmly.

"Thank God!" cried the Lady Beatrice. "And my children, Meggy? Fay—"

"Master Fay is well, and so is Master Herbert, my lady," said the housekeeper, slowly.

"And Giralda?" exclaimed the mother in terror.

"She is not ill, Meggy? Oh, she is not dead, my bright, beautiful girl? Tell me she is not dead?"

"She is not dead—not ill, my lady," answered the housekeeper, in a stifled voice.

Her revulsion of feeling on receiving this assurance almost overcame the Lady Beatrice. She clutched at the back of a chair, leaning heavily upon it, a wave of faintness sweeping over her.

Her tiring woman clasped her hands in alarm.

"Not ill—not dead!" said her ladyship, clasping her hands above her heart. "Oh, I have been cruelly frightened!"

She drooped her glittering head to the shoulder of her attendant, and gave way to a wild, tempestuous burst of weeping. It was as brief as it was violent.

A moment later, she raised her head, struggling for self-command, and said, in a broken voice:

"I can bear anything now that I know they are all well, Meggy. Your looks scared me so terribly! What is the trouble? Your errand concerns Giralda?"

"Yes, my lady," replied the housekeeper; "Miss Giralda is gone."

"Gone!" echoed the Lady Beatrice, in a frightened voice; "gone!"

"Yes, my lady," said Meggy, avoiding the terrified and anguished gaze of her mistress, and speaking in fluttering, sobbing tones; "Miss Giralda is gone. I rang the bell at the usual hour this morning for the children to get up. Then, as usual, an hour later, the breakfast-bell was rung. My master and the young gentlemen came to the breakfast-room, but Miss Giralda did not come. My master smiled and said my young lady had overslept herself for once, and bade me waken her. I went up to her room, but she was not there. The bed had not been slept in."

"Not slept in!" said the Lady Beatrice hollowly.

"No, my lady, and there was a note on the pillow."

"A note! Then she left home deliberately. A note! Did you bring it? Give it to me!"

The housekeeper drew from her bosom the little note Giralda had written to her parents before her departure, and gave it into the eager hands of her mistress.

The latter read it with burning, feverish eyes.

Then her ladyship sat down in a chair, and covered her face with her hands.

The twin sisters, her devoted attendants, looked at her with pitiful, sorrowing gaze.

"My noble, misguided child!" exclaimed the Lady Beatrice, after a brief silence. "Knowing so well her generous, impulsive nature, I might have feared this. Ah! I have been blind. If I had only been frank with her yesterday! So young—so beautiful—so ignorant of the world—where is she now?"

She turned to the housekeeper, and said: "Giralda left her home last night. Why did you not come to me with the news this morning, Meggy?"

"Because, my lady, my master said we were not to alarm you until we had tried every means to find Miss Giralda. My master drove straight to the railway station, but the ticket man did not remember seeing a young lady answering to her description. He said that there were several ladies who bought tickets for the night train, and one young lady with black hair and eyes was booked for London on the 4-30 morning train."

"It was not Giralda," said the Lady Beatrice. "Her eyes are dark blue, almost black"—she paused abruptly.

"They were black at times, my lady," suggested Meggy. "Might it not have been her?"

"Here in London, as ignorant of the world as a baby, as beautiful as an angel; oh, I hope not!" cried the Lady Beatrice, in anguish. "It is no place for her. She had a few pounds in her purse. I have taught her to dread London. Perhaps—nay, she must have gone to some country town to solicit a situation as governess. She spoke to me about wanting to go out as governess."

"We found some papers, or scraps of papers, in her room, my lady," said Meggy. "She had partly burned them. She must have taken them from my master's study. There was a *Times*, and two or three other daily papers."

"She has been studying them," interrupted the Lady Beatrice. "Perhaps some advertisement attracted her attention, and she has gone to answer it. Mary, bring me yesterday's dailies. You will find them in my boudoir."

The woman hurried to execute the errand, returning with the journals.

Her ladyship scanned their columns keenly.

"A nursery governess wanted," she read, aloud. "She did not answer that, for the advertiser lives in London. I know that my child cannot have come to London, after all my teachings. Ah! what is this?" and she started abruptly. "A secretary and companion wanted by Lord Trevalyan! Giralda could not have gone to Trevalyan Park," and the face of Lady Beatrice was convulsed with an awful fear. "No, no! Surely the good God who has so long shielded us, would have kept her feet from straying into such a pit! She cannot have sought out her father's enemy—a being who would crush her and all whom she loves with utter remorselessness! Some adverse fate cannot be compelling my child to bring ruin and destruction upon her family."

"No, indeed!" exclaimed the housekeeper, with a positiveness that contributed greatly to reassure the Lady Beatrice. "That child is no nurse for an old man, and she would realise the fact. Miss Giralda has a rare host of good sense, my lady. She wouldn't go trying for a situation where an elderly woman was wanted. Ignorant of the world as she is, she'd know better than that, my lady."

"I believe she would," said her ladyship, brightening. "The child could not have gone there. I must lose my faith in a watchful providence to believe that. Let me look at the other advertisements."

She looked them all over, but could not see one that was likely to attract her daughter's attention, and she finally dropped the paper, saying:

"She has, possibly sought some country town, thinking to support herself as music teacher, or daily governess. My poor, mistaken darling. She is, without doubt, weeping herself asleep to-night, homesick and sorrowful, yet resolute in her attempts to earn her bread, while I, her mother, am decked out in costly jewels, and shice the belle of the ball-room. Oh, it is hard! I said truly to my children that I am an actress"—and she spoke bitterly—"Only the stage on which I play my part is wider and larger than the boards of a theatre."

She was silent a moment, and then resumed:

"When does the next train leave, Meggy?"

"At three in the morning, my lady."

"And it is twelve now!" declared the Lady Beatrice, consulting the tiny watch, set with jewels, dangling from her diamond brooch. "The company must have gone to the supper-room, or be about going. I shall be missed. I must go down, even if my heart is breaking. My father will be hurt at my absence, and Lord Adlowe may suspect something of my secret. For my husband's sake, I must go down."

"You look like death, my lady," said the seamstress, sopping a cambric handkerchief with cologne and proceeding to rub the cheeks of her mistress.

"It's no use, Mary," said the Lady Beatrice. "The blood has all gone back to my heart. Never mind my looks. Lay out my wrappings. I shall go back with Meggy."

Both the women looked dismayed.

"Oh, my lady," said the seamstress, imploringly, "you will only ruin my master and yourself if you go. That policeman or detective—I know he is one, even if his clothes are plain, is still hanging about watching the house!"

"I will cheat him," said her ladyship, after a moment's rapid thought. "I will put on my opera cloak and hood, and go out as one of the guests. Meggy, you had better leave the house early, and go to the station by a circuitous route! Do not try to dissuade me from going. I must go! If I was ever wanted at home, I am now when this cloud rests upon it. I must consult with my husband in regard to the best course to pursue. I can do nothing without his advice and knowledge, for a slight misstep, now would ruin him and me! Oh, Giralda!" she added, with a moaning cry, "you little knew what trouble your generous self-sacrifice would bring upon us!"

The women made no further attempt to persuade her ladyship to forego her projected visit to the

Laurels, submitting in silence to her better judgment and the prompting of her instincts.

"One word more, Meggy," said her ladyship; "send a carriage for me at a quarter to three. Tell the cabman to call for Lady Pierce. There is no such lady, you know; I will enter the carriage then, and drive to the station. That is all, I think."

She paused a moment, to summon up her coolness and fortitude, and then gathered up her long and shining train, and set out on her return to the conservatory by the way she had come.

The terrace was deserted as she crossed it and approached the flower palace.

Lord Adlowe was standing on the marble steps, a bouquet of marvellous beauty in his hands.

He looked searchingly at the countenance of the Lady Beatrice as she came near.

She looked like a being of ice, incapable of emotion or feeling. Her manner was instinct with haughtiness, her bearing cold and quiet. Her eyes met those of his lordship, and he was startled at their glowing brilliance.

It was almost incredible that this cold and haughty belle could have been the impassioned, anguished creature of a brief while before.

"All alone, Lord Adlowe?" she asked, lightly.

"Are you star-gazing?"

"I was only awaiting your ladyship's return," said Adlowe, bowing politely; "Lord Hampton has been in search of you. Supper is about to be announced, and the dancers are impatient to get through with it in order to commence their exercise. May I escort you to the supper-room?"

The Lady Beatrice accepted his arm, saying:

"I was called to see a poor woman who needed sympathy and help. Thanks for waiting for me, my lord. And now let us join the candidates for supper."

They moved towards the drawing-room.

"You will take my bouquet?" asked Adlowe, bending towards her. "I see you have lost your own. We are almost betrothed you know, Lady Beatrice, and you cannot refuse my flowers, the language of which is love."

The Lady Beatrice dared not refuse the offering. She accepted them in her character of belle; but the wifely love and self-esteem of her other character made her cheeks burn as she did so.

"Your ladyship will give me the first waltz?" asked Lord Adlowe, as they emerged into the drawing-room.

"I shall not dance to-night," replied the Lady Beatrice. "As hostess, I must devote my time to my guests, and see that all the timid young ladies, the spinners, and wall-flowers are provided with partners. Do not urge me, Lord Adlowe; I cannot dance."

At this juncture, Lord Hampton, pale with suppressed anxiety at the singular absence of his daughter from the scene of festivities, espied through the throng the Lady Beatrice and her suitor.

The sight was an intense relief to him. He had feared and dreaded some development of the mystery enveloping her ladyship. He had thought of seeking her in her rooms. He had had an idea in his inmost heart, but half acknowledged to himself, that she might have effected one of her mysterious absences, or silences—he knew not what to term them.

His face brightened at once, and he offered his arm to a dowager duchess—the noblest guest of the evening, excepting the scion of royalty—and proceeded to lead her to the supper-room.

Most of the guests had marked the absence of their hostess; and her return to the drawing-room, leading on Lord Adlowe's arm, excited speculation at once. It was immediately rumoured that she had been on the terrace *tête-à-tête* with her lover, Lord Adlowe, who had seized the first opportunity after his return, to renew his suit for her hand; all the world knowing that his lordship had loved her ever since she first entered into society.

Adlowe's manner went far to provoke the opinion also that his suit was favoured by her ladyship. He had an air of suppressed jubilation, which was thought to spring from recent encouragement.

The Lady Beatrice, cold and brilliant as usual, did nothing to favour the opinion. She was gracious and smiling in the supper-rooms, although she half thought her heart was breaking, and that her glances must be wild and strange. Supper over, the dancing began. Neither the Lady Beatrice nor Lord Adlowe danced. The former performed her duties as hostess with rare grace. None of her guests—not even the plainest or most timid—had time to feel neglected.

The hours wore on.

After two, the carriages began to arrive for the early goers. After half-past two, there was a constant succession of announcements of carriages, although many of the untiring young people had no thought of departing before dawn. The Lady Beatrice flitted about among her guests; and finally eluding the watchful glances of Lord Adlowe, stole through the conservatory to the terrace, and thence by the private way to her own rooms.

Her attendant was there alone. Meggy Fleck had been gone an hour.

The Lady Beatrice hurriedly exchanged her amber robe for one of pearl-hued satin, her seamstress suggesting the change.

"That amber dress might be recognised as you go out, my lady," she said. "Lord Adlowe, or the earl, would know it at once. Meggy took a long cloak and bonnet to the station for you to travel in. Oh, my lady, I hope you'll yet off unseen by that detective, or anyone else, and that you'll gain some clue to where poor Miss Giralda has gone—the dear, sweet lamb!"

The earl's daughter threw over her dress a long white opera-cloak, drawing the hood over her face in such a manner as to completely conceal the latter.

"You know what to do, Mary," she said. "Do not let my absence be suspected. Good-bye."

She wrung the hand of her weeping attendant, and unlocking the door, passed out into the great hall.

It fortunately happened to be deserted.

She glided to the dressing-room unseen, but had scarcely gained the portal when the servant announced the carriage of "Lady Pierce."

The Lady Beatrice descended the staircase and passed out of the hall, gaining the carriage unrecognised. The cabman drove off at once, another carriage sweeping into its place.

The earl's daughter looked out of the cab window, and marked the person she had deemed a detective. He was leaning against the area railing, conversing with a liveried footman. He seemed merely some passer who had stopped to listen to the music and to watch the dancers through the uncurtained windows. But the Lady Beatrice was not deceived by appearances. She knew that his presence so continually in the street, so often before Hampton House, meant harm to her. The necessity for perfect secrecy—the mystery of her life—made her prompt to recognise danger.

"Outwitted again, Mr. Detective," she murmured. "You can tell your employer, Lord Adlowe, that he is not yet on the track of my secret."

She leaned back on the seat, and the cab whirled out of the street into a more quiet one, on its way to the Victoria Station.

(To be continued.)

THEODORE POWNELL.

THEODORE POWNELL, Esq., a banker, was retiring from business, looking over his papers, and winding up his affairs, preparatory to his leaving his town-house and settling, "for life," at his pleasant country seat. "For life," he said, and his friends said for him. And yet Theodore Pownell, though upright, strong, and handsome still, might with propriety have been called by the rising generation around him, "an old man." The soft brown curls that fringed his lofty brow showed few silvery threads among their luxuriance, it is true. But for all that, Mr. Pownell was sixty-one on the day we write, and had seen most of his early companions and friends fade away from his path in life, as he went forward, vigorous, successful, and strong.

Having no longer to take stock of his extensive business operations, Mr. Pownell, at the close of a fatiguing day spent in his late partner's office over the adjustment of their joint accounts, was amusing himself by taking stock of the past life which had now come satisfactorily, but for ever, to the end.

Amusing himself, did I say? Nay, his face was grave, and even sad, as he busied himself with the contents of a desk and safe that stood, always locked, in the apartment he called his "study," at home.

Letters, papers, bills, and receipts had been looked over, thinned out, and put orderly away.

It was summer, and the windows of the study were open. The house fronted upon a square. Through the window he could see the waving of trees, and hear the sound of light laughter and happy voices. His daughter Georgina was walking with two of her young lady friends. He could see her well from where he sat. Truly she was a beautiful girl, with her jet-black hair and large dark eyes, her stately figure, and her rich brunette complexion.

Very like her mother, whom he had married

solely for her beauty and her grace, twenty years ago.

And then Mr. Pownell sighed. This is a scandalous world, as we all know, to our sorrow.

Mrs. Pownell, with all her beauty, was only a shallow coquette and flirt, who thought much more of exhibiting her charms in public, for the admiration of strangers, than of making the house of her husband a pleasant place of refuge to the wearied and harassed man.

Be this as it may, it is certain that Mrs. Pownell, still stately and handsome—she was many years younger than her husband—sat at that very moment in her splendid drawing-room, entertaining, with "wreathed smiles," two handsome and courteous young men, while Georgina and her young friends were laughing and gossiping within reach of the prudent mamma's ear and eye.

It is also certain that though Mr. Pownell was a polite and attentive cavalier to his wife and daughter whenever they required his services at opera, party, or ball, he would as soon have gone for sympathy, in trouble or disgrace, to the man in the moon, or to the Egyptian sphinx.

He listened now to the light talk and laughter rippling up from below with a curious expression in his face. It was opera night, and he was in full evening dress, for in the course of an hour he was to have the honour of escorting the ladies of the household to their carriage and their box. Meanwhile he was best in his study—they with their naval guests.

Opera night! An organ out in the square suddenly struck up one of the very airs he was to hear that evening. He hummed it mechanically to the end as he listened.

And then the stop was changed, and an old, old air rang out—an air that he had thought sweet and sad, and full of the most plaintive melody, once.

Once! once! Nay, it must have been an hundred years or more since he stood beside the pasture bars on the "old home farm," and heard a sweet young voice trill out the plaintive music of

"In the days when we went gipsying,
A long time ago!"

The "days when we went gipsying," indeed! They were over for ever, for him. For his fashionable wife and stately daughter they had never been. In his own life harassed and anxious as it had often been at times, was a store of experience such as they had never known.

Still the organ played on, and the rich man's thoughts went wandering back from his luxurious study to the old red farm-house on the "Sunset Hill." He saw himself once more a poor boy, driving the cows home from pasture, with a little blue-eyed child in a pink gingham frock and sun-bonnet, trotting by his side. He saw himself a tall lad at school, and the pink gingham frock sat near him, and was helped by him over sundry fearful pit-falls, in the shape of long words in the spelling-book, obtrusive questions in geography, and pig-headed sums in the dog-eared arithmetic that "wouldn't add up." He saw himself, later still, a spruce clerk in a country shop, whose stock of worldly wisdom far outshone that of the "pastors and masters" to whom he was still forced in a measure to submit. The pink gingham had changed to a snowy lawn, sprinkled over with forget-me-nots as blue as the wearer's eyes, or his own! In those days, their eyes had been said to be exactly alike. He glanced at the glass now. His own were unshed tears and he could not compare their colour with that memory of the past.

Pretty, gentle, quite little Susie Gray! How sweetly those blue eyes looked up at him over the pasture bars by moonlight that night when at his request, she sang "In the days when we went gipsying, a long time ago." How plainly he could hear the soft clear voice still!—sweet, but with a dash of sadness in it all the time that thrilled the nerves and touched the heart of the most careless listener. How he had loved her then, with all the freshness and ardor of a boy's first love. How meekly and modestly she had returned, that more boisterous affection! How pure she was—how true.

The organ ceased. The man was moving away, when some money clanked at his feet. He saw the hand that had thrown it to him close the blind, and the poor Italian went away elated. It was the rich man's offering to the memory of his early love, and the happiness and good that gift conferred were bestowed in her sweet name.

"Susie! Susie! Oh, if I had but been as true as you were! If you were only my wife now—if my child was your daughter—how different life might be!" groaned the rich man, as he flung himself once more into his seat. He touched a spring in the safe that stood open before him, and a secret draw slid out.

It contained only a silken tress of chestnut hair. But poor as the treasures was, it was more than house or lands to the lonely millionaire!

Alas! his repentance came too late for atonement, as repentance almost always does, in this weary world of ours. He had left the girl he loved—deserted her cruelly, for the sake of his grasping ambition; and when he would have returned to her once more, she was lying at rest in the village churchyard and the age upon the stone above her head was "twenty-three."

She loved you to the last—she left you her forgiveness with her dying breath, and charged me to give you mine," said the bereaved mother, when she met the man who had broken her daughter's heart; "and so I give it, for Susie's sake." With it, she gave him the tress of hair cut off for him by Susie's trembling hand, on the last day of her life.

Like one in a dream the rich man sat, his face bent down upon the silken hair, which was wet with his fast falling tears.

Presently came a light tap at the door.

"Papa! we are nearly ready to go," said a lady's voice. "Mamma has rung for the carriage."

There was a slight pause.

"Very well, my dear," said Mr. Pownell, with an effort, in his usual tone.

Ten minutes later he came out, locked the study door behind him, and banded his wife and daughter to the carriage with his usual grave courtesy. He kept in the back of the box that evening, and was very silent. He had a slight headache, he said.

And when, six months later, the rich man died of a short, severe illness, those who prepared him for his burial found resting upon his heart a little golden locket containing "only a woman's hair." They left it there, and it was buried with him.

M. W. S. G.

EVELYN'S PLOT.

CHAPTER VII.

He deems me unprovided,
And thinks to fall upon me by surprise.
He errs. I too have been in action. He but grasps
His evil fate—most evil—most mysterious.

EDITH STUART—for by that name alone we can at present recognise the fair young creature whom we but now left in the luxury of her own splendid apartments—had passed a troubled night. She had listened for hours to each sound that had come from the more habited part of the large, old-fashioned house, to judge from each familiar or strange noise whether her fears were realised, or whether the night was to pass by as it had done many a long month, aye, and it might be years, with the same monotony of exemption and of crime. But she had heard little that could guide her, only some of the usual sounds that forced their way through the thickly-bazed and double doors. Cries as of someone in excitement of joy or grief, a little laugh, the quick moving of tables and of chairs, the shuffling of feet, the slamming of a distant door. The sounds were too familiar, too much resembling what she had heard for weeks, nay, for months, in that house, for her to be unusually alarmed or disturbed, or to augur from them anything of unusual moment.

And, at last, wearied with listening and the exhaustion of her own troubled thoughts, she had sunk into a deeper sleep towards morning, and was scarcely awakened from the strange dreams and the uneasy torpor that had taken the place of her usual refreshing sleep, when her maid informed her that "Mr. Stewart was waiting to see her, and hoped it would not be long before she was dressed and ready to receive him."

The blue eyes flashed indignantly.

"Tell him that I am tired—that I had a bad night, and that I cannot see him for at least an hour or more," was the pettish reply.

Fantin disappeared, but returned in a few minutes with the following brief note, written in pencil

"Do not be a simpleton, Edith. All is at stake. I cannot wait for a woman's caprice. If you do not see me at once I shall leave the house for an indefinite period; and the safety of those you care for most in the world, be completely compromised, if not ruined, and you, foolish child, cast adrift on the world, without home or friends. I will wait half-an-hour; no more."

P. S.

The girl turned pale—very pale, as she read. But, still, there was a bitter tremor on the full pouting lip, that told of the scorn that the girl felt for the writer of the note, or for the meaning of its lines. However, it had sufficient power to change the girlish caprice that had dictated the first proud message, and she hastily sprung from the bed, and began her toilette.

"Quick, Fantin, it matters not how I look. There, give me the first morning wrapper that comes to hand, and twist my hair up any way. What matters it for him," she said in a low tone, that perhaps was meant for Fantin's ears, but which did not escape that quick-witted damsel's comprehension. The brief toilette was rapidly made. The long, thick hair, twisted in rich coils, that only displayed its abundance and beauty the more from its entire simplicity. The white wrapper, with its pale blue ribbons, was carelessly fastened round the slight figure, and fell in soft folds that added to the graceful symmetry of the perhaps too girlish form.

Edith had never been more carelessly nor more simply dressed, and never had she looked more entirely lovely girlishly glowing and fresher than on that morning.

Her eyes were sparkling with excitement, her cheeks and lips brilliant with the mingled indignation and eagerness that had been working in her young heart ever since the reading of that brief note.

Her small fingers were working with tremulous agitation, as she threw herself on a chair-lounge in her boudoir, and sent the maid to announce that she was ready to receive the writer of the note.

Her bright eyes were fixed eagerly on the door, and as it opened her heart beat with a violence that she was fain to press her hand on her side to repress.

But her lip retained its half scornful curve, as she carelessly touched the hand he extended with the tips of her fingers, and then motioned him to a seat at a little distance from her own.

But, though he accepted the chair she thus indicated, he drew nearer to her, ere he attempted to speak.

"Well, Edith, I find you have been at work," he said, bitterly; "you have reason to be proud of your plans and plots. They are certainly rather beyond the usual abilities of a young lady scarcely seventeen."

She smiled scornfully. "I have had a skilful tutor," she said, "even if your compliments were merited; but, I have at present to learn what I have done to deserve them."

"Oh, I should but waste time were I to repeat what you have done," he said, angrily; "but I will tell you, if you like, what has been the result. Are you prepared to hear?"

She bowed her head. "And are you prepared for all the results of the mischief you have done; the utter ruin you have wrought to all my well-laid plans?" he resumed, with increased fierceness of manner. "What will the dainty Edith say to giving up her luxurious apartments, her maid, her carriage, her horse, her elegant toilette, and her lover for ever?"

The girl paled a little, but did not reply.

"Nevertheless, it is more than likely that she will have to sacrifice all these little trifles," he went on, lashing himself, as it seemed, yet more and more with the passion that was to burst later on the girl's heart. "And, I tell you, girl, all that would be but too light a punishment for your folly—your wilful folly and rebellion."

"Rebellion!" she repeated, haughtily. "I have no obedience to owe you, and there can be no rebellion when that is the case."

"Do you not," he exclaimed, "do you not owe me obedience, girl? you, who are solely dependent on my bounty, my tolerance, for support—for a name—for all that you have now or are likely to have in this world. As to the next, we will say nothing about that."

And he laughed a hard, bitter laugh. The girl's face blazed up like flame.

"Do you dare," she said, "do you dare to keep up that silly mockery?"

"The uncle and niece dodge. No, no, that is, not before others, you know. It is just as well to keep it up a little, nevertheless, lest one might make a slip in company. But it was not to that I was alluding. It was to the debt of gratitude you owe me—the bond which I hold for all that I saved you from, for all that I have accomplished for you. Child, do you remember your position when I first found you? Do you remember your misery, your hardships, your—"

"I remember all," she said; "all, and I owe you nothing; or I owe you nothing but scorn and hate. If you had left me to the fate I then had in store, I should have been far, far happier than I am now, for I should have been innocent, innocent myself, and unknowing of the great wrongs, the great crimes of others."

And her eyes softened for a moment in repentant moisture at the thought of the days of her childish, happy unconsciousness.

"You took me from a master who made a profit of my child beauty, my child talents," she resumed.

"But what have you done? His were lawful, innocent gains compared to yours, and my exhibition as a dancing-girl in his wandering troupe a far less degrading one than—"

"Hush," he said, "hush. The time is rather too critical just now for us to venture on hard names, even in private; and there is little good in all this raking up of the past. It is of the present and the future that I would speak. Child, answer me, and truthfully, or it may be the worse for you—and for one other, too. Had you anything to do with the events of last night?"

A paleness came over the flaming carnation that excitement and indignation had painted on the cheek.

"I do not understand you," she said. "What has happened; for as yet, I have heard nothing? I could not sleep, and listened—and yet, I did not hear anything unusual."

"Then you expected something?" he said, eagerly.

No answer.

"Girl, will you reply?"

"I am not to be threatened," she said. "You are far more in my power than I am in yours, and I will not scruple to use it if it becomes necessary. Tell me, in few words, what has brought all this insolent rudeness on me, and I will answer truly if I answer at all."

And she played impatiently with a jewelled paper-knife that she had taken from a writing-table near her.

"I would not yield to your girlish folly, were you not necessary to my plans," he said, carelessly; "and for one other reason that I shall not tell you at this time. But, with all your faults and waywardness, I believe you are too proud for a lie, and so I'll even give you the chance of speaking truth, though I could swear you know all beforehand, and that you have brought it about by your love-sick nonsense. There, give me a cup of coffee. It's getting cold on that table; and I'll have a spoonful of brandy in it, and then I shall be in better tune to tell the story."

Edith did not attempt to move, and the man, with a half-suppressed imprecation, walked to the table, on which stood a massive silver coffee service, and poured out a cup of the fragrant Mocha. Then, taking a flask from his pocket, he flavoured it with a spoonful or two of the *eau-de-vie* it contained, and drank it down at one draught.

"Now," he said, "That is good—I am more in heart now. But, after all, it's no great matter to make a row about."

He sat down nearer the girl's seat than he had placed himself before, and began to speak in a low tone.

"Well," he said, "well. It's soon told, though what it will end in is not quite so easy to see. Last night we were all assembled as usual—all, save one or two whom we expected, as they had been for two or three nights and had sufficient ill-luck to have tempted them to try again, though not enough to frighten them away from the place—where things are less delicately managed than they are here—as you might know by this time, Mademoiselle Edith."

She made a slight gesture of disgust, but her lips were firmly closed.

"Well," he resumed, "we were just in high feather. A friend who shall be nameless, and his eyes gleamed with snake-like cunning at Edith's flushing face—a friend who shall be nameless, had just lost a pretty tight sum, and was going to retrieve matters by doubling the stakes. Arrangements had been made, you understand—proper arrangements—for the disposal of troublesome interlopers; and glasses emptied to the success of—the firm. I always have my eyes on doors and windows, and never give up my seat—no, not if the Prince Royal was to pay me a visit. And very lucky it was, for just as the cards were going to be dealt, and when one round had already been laid on the table, I saw shadows pass the window, I heard the muffled sounds of steps, and the next minute I was safe in the ante-room, long before the fools round me knew that anything was the matter. But I peeped from my hiding-place, Edith, and I saw what made me grin, even then. It was jolly fun, I promise you—the scared faces, the desperate grab at the gold and notes, some dropping their jaws and their cards at the same time, and sitting like gaping fools; others making a rush at the doors, and falling affectionately in the embrace of the shutters—oh, it was rare fun! But that that was not the best of the joke after all—"

He paused, but the reply Edith vouchsafed was:

"Wretch! contemptible wretch!" muttered between her tightened lips.

The man laughed, and went on:

"Well," he said, "well, hard words break no bones, especially when they come from such pretty lips. However, to go on with the story:

"The windows were closed as usual, but I suppose in the confusion, some of the Peelers had thought

it better to let in a little air into the hot *mêlée*, and, by so doing, with exquisite foresight, they gave an opportunity for a pitched battle and a fatal escape."

The flush had gone from the girlish face, and she looked piteously at him.

"Speak, in mercy, speak!" she said. "Who—who was killed?"

He looked at her for a few minutes, like a tiger waiting to seize his prey. Then he calmly replied:

"I tell you, girl, I was only in the ante-room, looking through a loop-hole. How could I be likely to distinguish persons and faces in such a *mêlée*?"

She stamped her little foot impatiently.

"Wretch!" she exclaimed; "unfeeling, heartless, base wretch. I am not to be trifled with and tortured with impunity. I know well what you would imply. You mean that I should believe that—that he was killed. But it is false—false! you would tell me if he were dead; you would not lose such a chance of torturing me. No, no! Do you think I do not know you, deep and cunning plotter though you are? You would not spare me that pain if you could help it."

And she laughed—such a poor, strained laugh—that sounded mockingly, as if she strove to cheat herself. Poor Edith!

"Wrong," he said, "wrong again. I tell you it is in mercy that I have broken it to you thus gradually. But I will tell you now, as you insist on knowing, all that I did. Yes, and then you will, perhaps, hate yourself, for forcing the knowledge. I saw Cecil Rivers struggling madly with a man whose face I could not distinguish in the confusion and the glare. I saw them both disappear through the window, and I heard a heavy fall. A man was taken up and conveyed to the hospital, I suppose, by the police, to all appearances dead. He was, as I believe, Cecil Rivers!"

The girl uttered a low cry, and hid her face in her hands for some moments.

"I do not believe it!" she said, eagerly, raising her blanched face. "I do not believe it! No—no! It was not him—not Cecil! He is too young, too full of life, joy, and instinct to die! It could not be Cecil!"

The man laughed bitterly.

"As you please," he said, "as you please. If you like to live in a fool's paradise, you can. But I tell you in honest truth that I have no doubt that it was Cecil Rivers, and the only consequence of such a trifling affair is to make our levitating more imminent. Now, can you refuse to go?"

"Yes," she said, "yes. I will not go while his fate is in doubt. I shall not stir from this place, hateful as it is, till the truth is known—till you can prove to me without doubt that Cecil is dead."

The man started up with a flushed, angry face, that looked as if he could have found it in his heart to inflict actual corporal punishment on that fragile being, who was yet so firm and proud in her wilfulness. But either the feminine, girlish beauty of the fair, child-woman restrained him, or some more politic and selfish reason.

"Hark ye, Edith," he said, "you are no fool, though you act like one, and I suppose I must even take you fully in my confidence. You cannot suppose that I am going to be caught like a rat in a trap, nor to run the risk of a complete blow up and ruin; of blazing abroad inquiries about a young gentleman caught in a gaming-house, just to please a love-sick girl. And to tell you the truth, I don't see any good to be got from this same handsome beau of yours, even if he were alive. He's utterly done for in any case. His money is all gone; and his character too; and his wealthy relations would not advance fifty pounds to save him from the gallows or the hulks. So you may just quietly give him up, and you'll soon find a lover where we are going. Russian princes, and German counts will fall in crowds at the feet of the little English rosebud, and I'll be generous enough to spare one victim for your benefit."

And again the sneering laugh sounded in the room. Edith's blue eyes flashed like the steel of a Toledo rapier.

"No wonder," she said, "no wonder that so base a mind cannot understand anything that is true or unselfish. I shall not argue with you, but my mind is made up. I will not go till I know Cecil's fate."

The man looked at her for a few moments with a doubtful expression, as if uncertain what to do or say next. Then his look changed to a more frank and kindly glance, which sat like a strange garment on his dark, sinister features.

"Well, well, Edith, you are a wilful girl, but I have some remembrance of the days when I cared for a woman's love and woman's smile, though now I would give the whole of the bright eyes in Rotten Row for a safe pack of cards, and the only hearts I care for are trumps. However, I will take pity on your girlish folly thus far as to explain so much: I can at least be certain of one alternative. Either

Cecil Rivers is dead, or he will have to fly for his life. For, as true as I am here—and as true as I shall be across the Channel ere twenty-four hours are passed, I tell you that there was murder done on one side or the other, and your lover is either a corpse or a criminal. If he does fly, we may, perhaps, fall in with him, and help him out of a scrape, for there is an instinct that will very likely lead him and me to one goal. He is the right stock for that is Cecil Rivers."

Edith looked questioningly up through the stifling tears that well nigh dried as they dropped on the faint cheek.

"What mean you?" she said. "Surely his is a race stainless and honourable. He is good and noble, is Oliver Danvers—and—"

"Peace, foolish girl, peace," said the man, with a kind of dignity in his manner. "You talk, but like the other blind fools of this unjust world. A man risks thousands in some speculation that will either bring him wealth or ruin—aye, and not only to him, but to countless, unknown numbers, who are linked in his fault. But he—he is only a lawful, honourable gamester, and if lawful, a lauded and courted—if not an unfortunate and pitied man. And what is that but a gigantic gambling, which deserves public reprobation, infinitely more than the poor, harmless plucking of some rich fool, or brainless youth. And such gamblers have been the Danvers. Why should not the son of Mark Danvers follow the traditions of his fathers? It is but just retribution."

And the man's face wore a deeper look of stern determination, and his voice was grave and calm as he spoke—far different to the sneering, bitter tones which he generally used, in talking to his fair ward.

"What know you of Cecil's relatives," she asked, her anger lost for the moment in wonder at the change, and the unwonted gravity of the words.

"What know you of them?"

"What do I know of them?" he said, turning away from her scrutinising eyes. "What do I know? Too much, child, too much! 'Tis to them I owe that I am what I am."

And he walked hastily to the window and gazed for moment from its curtained frames. Then he returned to the girl with a different manner either from his mocking tones, or the deeper emotion that he had betrayed but now.

"Come, Edith," he said, "I have perhaps tried you too much; I scarcely thought you cared for that young popinjay as you do; but, if you will trust me for once, you shall not have cause to complain. Go we must, and go we shall, this very night; but when once in safety I will do all I can to ascertain the truth for you, as to his fate, child. Destiny works slowly but surely, and even the reckless gamester, Paul Stewart, has his faith. It is a long and tortuous path, but it will end in the sure goal at last—the sure goal for which I have waited for years."

There was silence for some minutes.

Then he rose once more from the seat he had resumed, and said brusquely:

"You will be ready, Edith, by midnight, and if you can only manage Fantin I will indulge you by taking her. Perhaps her mouth is better stopped in that way than any other. Mind, I brook no farther argument nor resistance. If you have any regard for Cecil or yourself you will submit and wait."

And he left the room without waiting for a reply. He had said right when he pronounced Edith Rivers was no fool. All child that she looked, and young and impulsive and entranced as she was, there was a fund of poesy, sense, and of lofty authority when it pleased her wayward spirit.

She could resist oppression to the very death; but there was a voice in her heart that ever responded to the call, when love, and when the important interests that love involved, hung on the die. And she was sufficiently discerning to perceive that the man she called "uncle," was true in the last argument he had used.

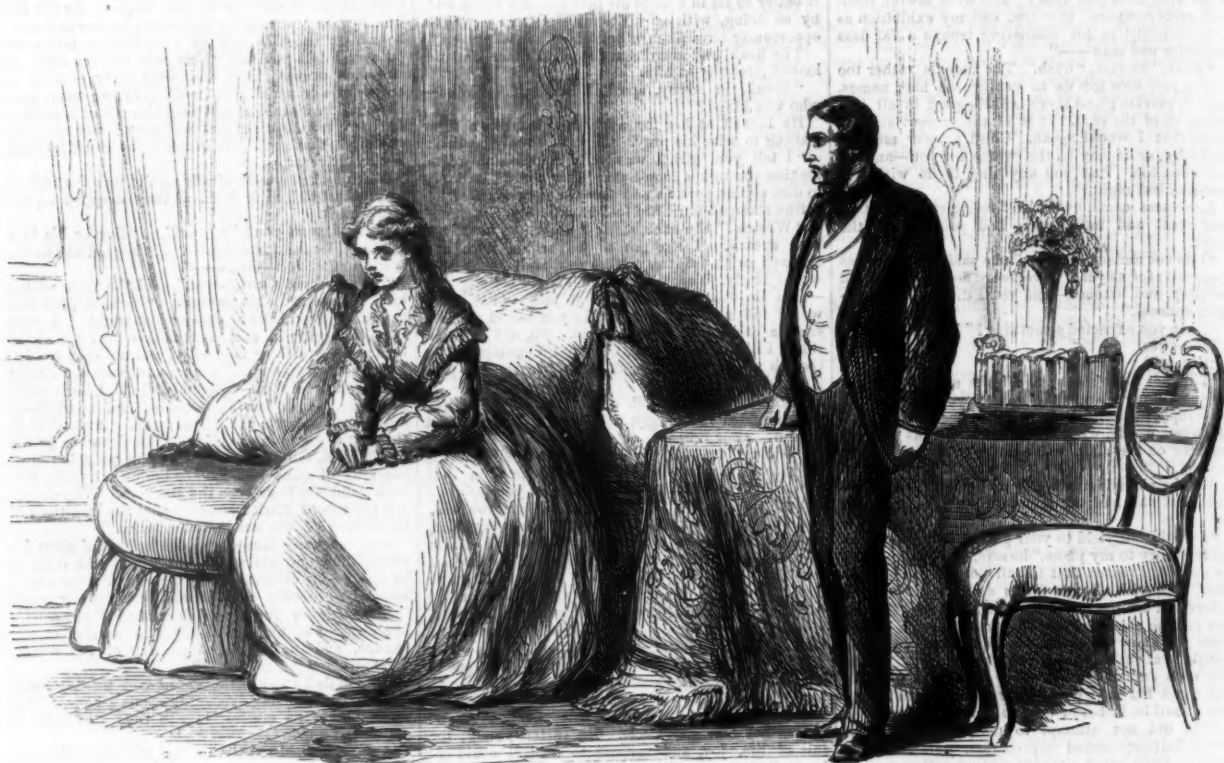
If she persisted in remaining, what could she do? Could she present herself before Cecil's family as an unacknowledged, unsought love of the lost relative. Had he not a sister to care for him if wounded, or to weep over him if dead. One, not as she would care, not as she would weep. Her womanly pride shrank from the shame of obtruding herself on that fair, refined girl—that noble, grave man—in such a character.

Edith's had been a wandering and a neglected life, but native grace and native pride, at least, supplied the outward guise of elegance and of purity.

CHAPTER VIII.

I come again to the muse of grief,
A man, afflicted and distressed
As in a cloudy atmosphere.
Be patient—time will reinstate
My health and fortunes.

OLIVER DANVERS lay in the grateful calm un-



[A MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW.]

consciousness of extreme weakness in the dawning light of that eventful morning.

Too feeble to think—too feeble even to be disturbed by the memories of the past—too deliciously sensible of feeling the blessing of renewed life, and of freedom from severe and crushing pain, he lay with his eyes fixed on the light form that reclined in the chair near his bed, and which had not even dared to move, lest his deep slumber should be disturbed.

Each minute of undisturbed repose might be life to the sufferer, and for that cause Evelyn dreaded the approach of the hour when the stir of morning, and the arrival of the surgeons should break the calm repose that seemed to be stealing over him. How she studied each fine feature of that handsome face as she gazed! How each noble trait seemed to endear itself to her as she read its expression. She felt as if she had never before appreciated the open, intellectual character of the massive brow, the sweet philanthropy of the firm mouth, the calm dignity of the noble contour of the head, and the even balance of character that it spoke.

Evelyn had scarcely dared to believe her own senses. She had seen the feeble movement of the eyelids, the slow opening of the dulled eyes, but the hope which that motion excited was too dear to be cherished hastily.

She fancied that there was a gleam of sense and intelligence in the eyes; but the certainty that slumber and quiet were the safest panaceas for the invalid, prevented her yielding to the eager impulse that prompted a spring to the bedside, and the loving inquiries which might satisfy the long, long terrors, and hush them to rest.

But when the head slowly moved round, and the glance was intelligently and pleasingly turned upon her, then Evelyn could refrain no longer.

"Oliver, dear Oliver, you are better!" she whispered, leaning over the bed, and bending her lips to his ear.

"I—I have been ill, have I not?" he asked, faintly. "Yes, yes! You must be very quiet. I shall leave you if you speak," replied the girl, scarcely able to repress the thrill of delight at the return of sense and power in the invalid.

He smiled faintly.

"No—no! do not leave me. Where is —"

"All is well and safe," said the girl, venturing, for perhaps, the first time in her life, on a slight equivocation. "All is well. Only keep quiet, and try to get strong again."

And then going to the table, she selected the draught, placed to be taken on the first waking of sense and consciousness, and held it to his lips, supporting his head with the other arm.

How strange it seemed to the young girl, and yet how sweet, to minister thus to the wants and the need of one so dear.

Never had she known before her own feelings. Never had she appreciated how completely her own happiness depended on the life and health and companionship of him, who had been to her as a guardian, a brother, and as she now knew as one dearer still.

Oliver lay still, his hand clasping hers, his eyes so languidly turned to hers, now closing in the pleasant languor that succeeds a severe attack of pain and illness.

And thus, perhaps, an hour or more passed, and the sights and sounds of morning came on the eye and ear; and ere another half-hour had passed, the sound of steps was heard, and the gentle opening of the door betrayed the approach of the most intimate and kindly of the doctors summoned to the bedside. He noiselessly approached, and questioned Evelyn rather with his look than words.

"How is our patient?"

Evelyn drew him from the bedside and briefly related what had happened.

The doctor frowned at the recital of the nurse's careless tending, but when he re-approached the patient, and examined the pulse and face, his frown turned to a smile.

"Nay, the careless jade, she has proved, much against her intention, the best physician after all, though he really owes his life to you, young lady. That wholesale phlebotomy has done more than the whole College of Surgeons would have ventured on. Youth and strong constitution will bear more than surgical skill could reckon on. High fever has been doubtless averted, and the pressure on the brain removed by the accident. All now depends on care and quiet, and the patient's own submission and self-control."

After a few more directions, and a kindly caution to Evelyn not to kill herself in her zeal for her patient, he took his leave, promising to return in two or three hours to meet his colleagues, and Evelyn remained in the transient happiness of one from whom a great burden is moved, a terrible fear, a crushing agony of grief not to be borne. Alas, alas, poor human nature!

The freedom from such passing terrors is but realised and appreciated for a brief space. When the mountain is removed, then the small hills resume their giant proportions. When the one great pain is lulled to sleep, then the small finger-aches, and pricking pangs that have been lost in the numbing absorption of one overwhelming agony, again make themselves heard in their waiting moments.

Had mortals no sorrows they would be most wretched, for the minor sufferings that infest everyday life with their insignificant annoyances would then acquire such a power and preponderance over the mind that peace and happiness would be banished from the heart.

Almighty wisdom is, indeed, the blessed guide of Almighty love, and blessed are they who can leave their destinies without terror in his hands:

Oh, far from this our daily life,
So oft disturbed by cares and strife—
By sudden wild alarms;
Oh, could we but relinquish all
Our earthly griefs, and simply fall
In Thine Almighty arms.

And Evelyn, poor girl, had indeed deeper causes for grief and anxiety than the small drawbacks to which we have alluded.

As she sat in the darkened room, scarcely venturing to move or tremble, as she watched the slumber in which Oliver's relaxing features were sinking, the thoughts that had been in a measure absorbed by Oliver's great and exciting danger, now reverted to her fugitive brother.

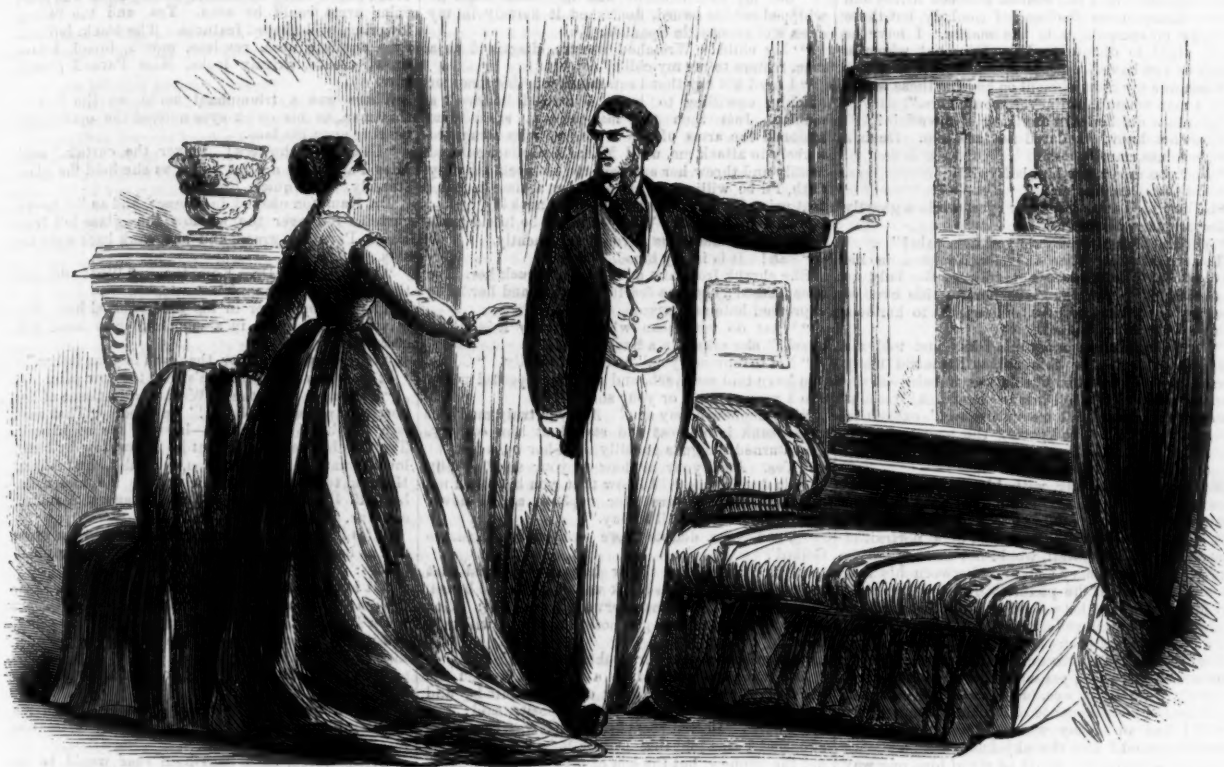
"Was it all her criminal, guilty brother? Was he the author of the wreck before her; the pallid features, the bandaged head, the splintered limb that spoke of such violence and suffering?"

Had it been in saving him that Oliver suffered, or was it in a jealous rivalry that Cecil had raised his hand against a brother cousin, like the noble Oliver?

It was strange that the girl never once dreamed that the fault had been Oliver's in any quarrel that had ensued. She knew that Oliver was too self-controlled—too noble-minded for any such dastardly outrage.

Much as she loved Cecil, she could not blind herself to the selfish indulgence—the impetuous wildness—the uncontrolled passion of the sole near relative she possessed on earth. And if there had been wrong, she could not for an instant doubt where that wrong lay

(To be continued.)



[THE OPPOSITE WINDOW.]

THE BIRTH MARK.

CHAPTER I.

Alas, what danger will it be to us,
Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!
Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.

IN a fashionable square in the west end of London, there was enacting the prelude to a drama of social life, which, to the student of human nature in its various phases, cannot fail to possess interest.

The hour was approaching sunset, and it was in the spring of the year. Miss Laura Parnail, the aristocratic owner of the then elegant mansion, sat solemn and severe in her dark robe of silk, and buried deeply in her own thoughts, until one of the young ladies addressed her thus:

"Miss Parnail, have you visited this famous fortune-teller, Senora Goliari? Did you accompany Carola?"

"I visit a fortune-teller!" replied Miss Parnail, laughingly.

"Oh, I know," continued the young lady, somewhat abashed, "but this is a most beautiful one."

"True," said another, vivaciously. "Senora Goliari, the fortune-teller, of Seymour Street, is a lady. Beyond the dubious shade which ever rests upon the reputation of all who follow the deceptive profession of astrologers, there is no stain upon the character of Senora Goliari, the Spanish fortune-teller."

"Her dark and regular features," remarked another, "her flashing, black eyes—her haughty air and graceful dignity, repel all familiarity."

"And," added the first speaker, "repels without creating dislike. She is lavishly charitable. It is true, Miss Parnail, she gives abundantly to the poor, and never refuses to aid the needy."

"And neither visits nor receives acquaintances. One visit, and you can go no more; or, if you go, you will not see Senora Goliari?"

"Yet I am to see her to-morrow," said the girl, blushing; "and as I have been favoured with one audience with this queen, and am to call upon her to-morrow, by her desire, am I not fortunate?"

"Describe her to me, Carola," said Miss Parnail, to the lovely speaker, who was her niece, but who neither loved her nor was beloved by her.

"That is impossible. She keeps two attendants, a Spaniard and his wife, two tall, grave, dark-featured persons, who do nothing but stare at impertinent people, whose curiosity strives to pry into what does not concern them. Still, it is rumoured that there is

a fourth person, not a servant of the place, who has been seen more than once, and it is said that the fortune-teller guards this mysterious personage from observation most zealously."

"I have seen that mysterious person," said Carola.

"He wears black velvet."

"No matter what he wears," interrupted another. "Is he old or young?—ugly or handsome?—short or tall?—what kind of a face?"

"The face of a duke," replied Carola, warmly. Then blushing, as she caught the eye of a handsome young man, she added: "yes, the face of a duke, or of a king, or of an emperor! A grand, noble, majestic face."

"Young or old?" cried three or four in chorus.

"His hair is as white as snow."

"Oh, then he is a blackamoor to me," said a pair of red lips.

"But his moustache is as black as jet."

"Ah, that is better."

"His features, though grave and sad, do not declare him to be over thirty-eight or forty."

"Oh, he is too old for me!" screamed a little, flaxen-haired girl of fifteen summers.

"And, strangest of all," said Carola, "he has a small birth-mark near the left eye—arrow-shaped."

"There! Miss Parnail has fainted," exclaimed several, as that lady slipped from her chair to the floor.

It was true, and yet no one there had ever believed that their hostess could faint. Hard and strong, both in frame and character, it was a remarkable thing.

She was speedily carried into a room adjacent to the parlour, where she was placed upon a bed, and every means at hand used to restore her to consciousness.

On recovering, which she soon did, Miss Parnail beckoned to her niece, and whispered:

"A small birth-mark near the left eye, arrow-shaped? Did he resemble this picture?"

As she spoke, she showed a miniature portrait of a gentleman.

"Very much, but older," answered Carola.

"Enough. Go, dismiss the company at once—all."

Carola obeyed, but at the door met a young man, whom she saluted coldly.

"Can I enter?" he said, "I heard that my aunt was ill?"

"Dr. Kampton knows that he is the medical attendant of Miss Parnail, who has ordered that he shall have access to her at all times."

With these words, spoken in an icy, formal tone, Carola glided from the room.

He whom she had styled Dr. Kampton frowned darkly and entered the apartment with downcast eyes. He was a tall, and not unhandsome young man, perhaps twenty-five years of age, though a life of unrestrained dissipation had already furrowed his face with premature wrinkles.

As he neared the couch upon which Miss Parnail reclined, he raised his eyes quickly and fixed them upon hers with a keen, steady scrutiny.

"You are labouring under unusual excitement," he said. "I was entering the house when a servant told me that you had suddenly fainted. Something mental and not physical, made you faint."

There was very little courtesy in his tone or manner, and much vexation, almost rudeness. "You are vexed this evening, Robert," said Miss Parnail, sharply, and sitting erect. "What did Carola say to you at the door?"

"It was not what she said that vexed me," he replied, bitterly. "It was her manner. I can see that she detests me."

"While you love her?"

"When you first prompted me to court her for reasons of your own," he replied, "I did not love her; but pique at her coldness has stimulated my indifference into a passion. I hate that fellow, Alfred Raymond, too, and she returns his love. Why do you encourage his visits to your house?"

"I encourage him? Not I!" exclaimed Miss Parnail. "I treat him very coldly, and he treats my coldness with perfect indifference."

"Tell him never to visit this house. Forbid him to address Carola."

"I dare not. I fear his father," replied Miss Parnail, moodily.

"His father? What power has his father over Laura Parnail?"

"I do not know, and therein lies his power—my fear that he knows what I have told you of Carola."

"He has, then, hinted that he knows something not generally known of Carola Fairmount?"

"I will tell you," said Miss Parnail, in a guarded tone. "Not long since he called here. His voice was short, but it was like a thunderbolt to me. He said, in effect:

"Miss Parnail, my son loves Miss Carola Fairmount, and I believe that she regards his suit favourably. Will you also favour it?"

"I have other views at heart," I replied; "I desire that your son shall not pay court to my niece."

"He frowned and said:

"As you please will not therefore please me, Miss Parnail, you desire that Miss Carola shall marry Doctor Kampton, and I know why. I am willing

that there shall be a fair contest between Alfred and Doctor Kampton for the hand of the lady, but there must be no compulsion in the matter. I have as much right to dictate to Miss Fairmont whom to marry as you have."

"Imagine my astonishment on hearing these words from a man whom I had never seen before."

"But how did he learn anything of the affair?"

"I do not know. I dared not ask him. He is a firm, resolute man."

"And you never saw him before?"

"Not that I can remember. Yet—"

She hesitated and closed her eyes, while a ghastly pallor crept over her face.

"Yet what? And why do you turn pale?"

The reader will notice that Dr. Kampton in his private conversation does not address the lady as Miss or Madame—that he gives her no title even of courtesy or common respect. He speaks to her as a judge speaks to a criminal.

"I grow pale because my mind has just told me suddenly that I saw this James Raymond many years ago—when—when Carola was a babe—at the moment when Carola fell into my hands. Ah, treacherous memory! to fail me until now!" exclaimed Miss Parnail, wildly, and pacing the apartment excitedly, wholly regardless of her dishabille and the presence of Dr. Kampton.

He remained standing, with his steady and gray eyes fixed upon the floor, his mind wrapped in sullen thought.

A close observer of the man and of a portrait of Miss Parnail on the wall, would not have failed to detect an extraordinary similarity between his features and those of the picture. This resemblance was far less marked between him and Miss Parnail, the latter having altered greatly.

The portrait had been painted many years before, and represented Miss Parnail in the prime of young womanhood, beautiful, yet with that dark, haughty, sinister expression of eye, brow and lip so distinct in the swarthy countenance of Dr. Kampton.

"If I had an enemy whom I feared as you do James Raymond," said the physician, after a silence of several minutes, "I would be rid of him, one way or another."

"We are not in Spain," retorted Miss Parnail, curtly, though she paused and regarded him earnestly.

"No. But we are Spaniards," said he, as a fierce gleam flashed from his dark gray eyes.

Those eyes—eyes firm, keen and cruel in their expression—were generally downcast; yet he often raised them suddenly, the lids leaping wide open, and revealing two bold, sharp, glittering orbs full of intelligence and daring, within which couched a demon of malice and treachery.

"James Raymond, if my enemy, is no less yours. Have you ever seen him?" demanded Miss Parnail.

"I have seen him. He once, you know, conducted a law case against me. I have no reason to like him," he replied, sharply, and biting his lips; "you remember that I was accused of having wounded a man in a gambling saloon. But before I came here to-day something occurred which annoyed me."

"What was it?"

"In a whim, this morning, I paid a visit to the Spanish fortune-teller, Madame or Senora Goliari."

"Ah!" exclaimed Miss Parnail, instantly, deeply interested. "You do not believe the foolish stories of fortune-tellers?"

"No. I called upon her because I had heard that she was remarkably beautiful."

"When she saw me, she stared at me wildly pressed her hand upon her bosom and swooned."

"Swooned!" echoed Miss Parnail, aghast.

"Yes; fainted outright—and that reminds me to ask you why you fainted just now?"

"No matter—a sudden weakness—nothing more. Go on with your story."

He eyed her sharply, and then continued:

"Madame Goliari is a beautiful woman; I should say she was thirty-four or thirty-five, but as handsome and majestic as a queen. She fainted, and a dark-faced servant in livery of green and silver followed by as dark-faced a woman ran into the room to aid her. They must have been watching near, for she made no outcry when she swooned. No sooner did they see my face than they exchanged glances of terror and hurried away with the unconscious fortune-teller."

"Great heaven!" thought Miss Parnail. "They were Lucerne and his wife Lauretta."

"I remained in the chamber of oracles, as the room is sonorously called, awaiting the return of Madame Goliari, and wondering why my presence had caused so great and sudden a commotion, until in stalked a tall personage clad in black velvet—the costume of a Spanish grandee, and wearing a sword."

"What pompous masquerader is this?" I thought, as I faced him.

"But my astonishment was increased when he whipped out his sword, flourished it fiercely in my eyes, and shouted in Spanish:

"My child! Wretched woman, disguised as a man, restore to me my child!"

"I need not say that I retreated from this stranger quickly, unwilling to harm a man I believed a maniac. Just then the man-servant rushed in, pinioned the arms of the stranger, who struggled fiercely to attack me, until Madame Goliari entered hastily and threw her arms around his neck. By my faith, I'd be willing to go mad for a time to have that pair of arms clasped around my neck!"

"Foolish! Mad! Will you never be less a mad-man!" exclaimed Miss Parnail, vehemently.

"Bah! It is in my blood," he said.

She shrank from him as if he had struck her. Her eyes flashed: she was fearfully pallid, and her looks expressed hate and terror.

"What do you mean when you say it is in my blood?" she asked, in a husky voice.

"Not to reproach you," he replied, coldly. "Come, you have told me much, and I have suspected more. Am I your nephew or your son?"

"My nephew or my son! Are you truly mad?"

She sank into a seat and stared at him eagerly. He returned the gaze steadily until her eyes fell.

"Yes. Am I your nephew or your son? Why do you deceive me? I know that you have had me educated as if I were your nephew, and I never doubted the story until to-day."

"Then your doubts were excited by Madame Goliari?"

"No. When she threw her arms around that mysterious stranger in black velvet, I left the house, especially as the man-servant cried out: 'Go! Away! or my lord will get loose, and then I will help him.'"

"Then how were your doubts excited?"

Dr. Kampton stepped to a window, tossed the heavy curtains aside, threw open the blinds, and pointing to a window of a house opposite, said:

"There! In that room! There it was, two hours ago, that I was told that Doctor Robert Kampton is not the nephew, but the son of Miss Laura Parnail."

Miss Parnail uttered a sharp scream of dismay, and covering her face with her hands, sank upon a sofa.

CHAPTER II.

DR. KAMPTON'S swarthy face, lighted up by the rays of the setting sun as they streamed through the open window, was very stern, his hand remained extended towards the opposite house; his eyes fixed upon the trembling woman.

His air was angry and threatening. If his bosom had a single spark of affection for this woman to whom he was indebted for everything he possessed, perhaps even for existence, neither his face nor his manner declared it.

She withdrew her hands from her face and raised her eyes to his.

There were traces of tears in those hard yet handsome eyes; not tears of shame, or sorrow, but tears of rage.

As she met his angry, threatening stare, in which was no little contempt, she sprang to her feet, confronted him boldly, defiantly, menacingly.

"If what you have dared to say to me, Robert Kampton, were true," she said, in a low, resolute whisper, "what right have you to elect yourself as my judge?"

"You have deceived me—have been deceiving me for years," he replied, in the same tone.

"Go on, Robert Kampton," she said, as he paused, as if overcome by a gush of grief.

"You did wean my love, if any I had, from the memory of my mother," he went on, speaking in a husky, hasty tone. "You made me hate the name of mother, hate myself, crush all principles of honour, and all sentiments of noble pride of self. I believed I was disgraced in being born. You said my father was—perhaps this one, perhaps that one; who could tell when I had such a mother? Oh, woman, whatever you may be to me, you have taught me to despise, to detest my mother—and made me what I am. Nor would I care to be any but what I am," he added, with a harsh laugh.

"Stop, Robert Kampton," she cried, as he turned away, and the sharpness of her tone arrested him at once, "Who told you that Laura Parnail was your mother?"

"The man who occupies that room."

"And who is he?"

"I may tell you soon," he replied, as he glanced at the open window across the street. "Ah, there he is, leaning from the window, looking in this direction."

Miss Parnail snatched up a powerful opera-glass and putting it to her eyes, gazed sharply at the man across the street.

The man's person was only partly visible. The

broad chest, burly shoulders, sturdy neck and muscular arms could be seen. Yes, and the daring, lowering, well-shaped features. The black, brilliant eyes, aquiline nose, resolute, mouth, broad, defiant brow, coarse, grizzly locks, Miss Parnail plainly saw.

There was a triumphant smile on the lips of this man, as his quick eyes noticed the opera-glass bearing upon his face.

"Close the shutters! Lower the curtain," said Miss Parnail in a faint voice, as she held the glass steadily. "Be quick, Robert."

Dr. Kampton obeyed in silence, and as the heavy curtains fell over the window the glass fell from Laura Parnail's grasp, and she sank back upon the sofa.

"Well," said Dr. Kampton. "What do you think of my informant?"

The cutting sneer in his tone aroused her. Her faintness was gone in a moment. She faced him sternly.

"If I am your mother, that man is your father."

It was now Dr. Kampton's turn to grow pale.

"That man my father. With what a tissue of lies you have woven my brain!" he cried. "That man is a low-born Portuguese—he told me so himself. True, he has some gold, but he is low, low by birth, low by nature, by education, by habit, by instinct. He used to be a brigand in Spain. He told me so himself. He prides himself in his baseness. A ruffian, a knave, an assassin!"

Miss Parnail's hard face seemed to grow as white and as hard as marble, as he spoke. Yet she replied, curtly:

"It is all true. He is what he boasts to be. Yet, if I am your mother, that man is your father."

Dr. Kampton, snare as he was, was proud, haughty, sensitive. Proud of his station in society, proud of his reputation as a physician.

Society does not turn its back upon a man because he is a *roué*.

But if the man be poor, low-born, base-born, yet honest, honourable, fascinating, society casts him away.

Dr. Kampton, as a base-born *roué* would be tabooed, if Society found him out.

"You evade my question," he said, angrily. "Am I to take it for granted that you are my mother?"

She made no reply. Her eyes were fixed vacantly upon the portrait, her face stern and pale, her lips colourless and compressed, her hands clenched. She might have been carved from stone for all the life that she showed, save the rise and fall of her bosom as her breath came and went, fast and thick.

"And if you are that wretched woman," he continued, still gazing angrily at her, "am I to take it for granted that he who calls himself Don Pedro del Amador, the ruffian, is my father?"

"Tell me why you sought that man?" she replied.

"I did not seek him. He sought me. A few days ago I met him in the theatre. He sat next to me, and I noticed that he eyed me intently. To-day I received a note asking me to pay a professional visit to Don Pedro del Amador, at the hotel opposite. This afternoon I called and on being ushered into his apartment I recognised the man who had annoyed me by his gaze in the theatre."

"He said nothing of any illness, but having seen me seated, remarked:

"I am told that you are the nephew of Miss Parnail, the lady who lives opposite."

"I am," I replied, coldly, for the fellow was offensively patronising in his manner.

"I have sent for you," he said, smiling insolently, 'to tell you that Miss Parnail, as she calls herself, is not your aunt, but your mother.'

"Who are you, sir? and why do you tell me this?" I demanded, rising.

"He saw that I was angry, for he became instantly polite and changed his insolent bearing as he replied:

"Pardon me, Doctor. I am a rude man low-bred and rough. You ask who I am, and I will tell you. I am a native of Portugal and a brigand. I am not afraid nor ashamed to say so. I pride myself upon the fact. I am a man of the world, a successful gambler. I call myself Don Pedro del Amador, but my real name is simply Pedro Diaz."

Miss Parnail suppressed a cry, but Dr. Kampton saw her increased emotion.

"Proceed! I am listening!" she exclaimed, and he noticed that an expression of fierce resolution fired her countenance.

"The Portuguese said:

"My real name is Pedro Diaz, and Miss Parnail can tell you who and what Pedro Diaz was some twenty-six or seven years ago. Tell her that I am Pedro Diaz, that I told you she was your mother, and not your aunt. Watch her narrowly when you tell her. If I lie you will know it. If I do not lie you will know it. That you and she will keep this fact a secret I do not doubt. But whether I

shall keep it secret or not depends upon Miss Parnail."

"Having said this, he bowed in his coarse, clumsy way to inform me that the interview had terminated."

"And you left him without a word?"

"No. I advanced and laid my hand upon his shoulder. I looked him steadily in the eye, and said: 'Pedro Diaz, I do not know what your motive is in telling me what you have. It may be from hate or malice. But I know this, and I tell it to you calmly, that if you have lied I will punish you.'"

"And what if I have not lied?" he demanded, with a rude laugh and an insolent stare. "Ah, that man is no coward, whatever else he may be. I do not think he values his life a hair, the bold ruffian."

"If what you say is true," I replied, "both I and Miss Parnail will act upon it."

"Good!" he cried. "But tell her to beware of Senora Goliari, and look sharply to her niece Carola, or Pedro Diaz may tell a truth in another matter."

"I left him then, and as he closed the door after me, he leered and grinned like the evil one he is."

"Yes, he is an evil one—always was!" exclaimed Miss Parnail.

"And I am this man's son, am I?" asked Dr. Kampton, bitterly. "It is well that I am the man I am, the *rough*, the unprincipled, the hardened, or the past might make a suicide. Am I your son? Yes or no?"

"You are my son," replied Miss Parnail, in a cold voice. "The time for concealment is past, for Pedro Diaz has found me at last."

"And am I the son of Pedro Diaz?"

"Yes. His son."

"Base-born?"

"No. Pedro Diaz was my husband. But you and I will speak with him together."

"Why did he not tell me that he was my father?"

"Because he does not believe it. Because he is jealous, and believed that you were the son of another man."

"Of what man?"

"Of that strange personage, the lunatic, whom you saw at the fortune-teller's."

There was not much that was good or amiable in the nature of Dr. Robert Kampton. He was brave, sagacious, intelligent; but he was without honour, mercenary, unscrupulous, cruel, treacherous, all selfishness. Yet he was proud. He had never believed Miss Parnail to be his aunt, nor even a relative. He had cherished a belief that he was high-born, and that some day it would happen the world would be amazed to learn that plain Dr. Kampton was of noble birth, the long concealed heir of some great property.

He had dreamed this, both asleep and awake. He had made this airy belief a part of his soul. From his early childhood he had known Miss Parnail, known her as his only friend and support. Yet he had never loved her, nor believed that she was a relative.

All his dreams, his castles, his aspirations, went down with a crash now, when she said:

"I am your mother, and that ruffian is your father!"

He had never loved his species, and now he felt his heart swell with hate for all, for all except one, Carola; and she detested him. He yearned for vengeance upon someone, no matter who that one might be.

"I am going to send for Pedro Diaz," said Miss Parnail, taking up a pen.

"It matters little to me what you do, or what he does. Perhaps I had better not meet him again. He may be, as you say, my father. I intend to leave this country."

"So do I, my son, when I have executed the work I have resolved to do."

"You must be speedy, then, if you go with me," he remarked, moodily.

"I shall use dispatch," she replied.

Dr. Kampton marked an expression upon her face which he had never seen before. Her eyes seemed to glare, and her lips to tremble with desperate resolve.

She rang a bell, and when a servant appeared, said:

"Deliver this note to Mrs. Gager's. Also tell Miss Carola that I wish to see her immediately."

The servant withdrew, and Dr. Kampton remarked:

"Shall I remain?"

"Certainly. I wish you to be present when this Pedro Diaz appears. What I have to say to Carola you may hear."

"You do not intend to receive Diaz in this room?"

"No. In the small room in the third story. The room you used to occupy when a boy—until your tastes or habits led you to have apartments elsewhere."

"Why receive him there?"

"You will be present. You will know why."

She seemed fierce and morose. So was he. They remained silent until Carola entered.

Carola, a girl of rare beauty of face and form, entered with a proud and graceful air. Her colour was higher than usual, and her dark eyes very brilliant. As her glance fell upon Dr. Kampton her face expressed chagrin. She had no desire to see him, there or elsewhere.

Miss Parnail, whose dress was no longer in disorder, sat sternly regarding this beautiful face, and instantly remarked the high colour, the haughty air, and the flashing eyes.

"Ah," thought Miss Parnail, biting her lips, "she has received a proposal from Alfred Raymond and accepted it."

"Carola," she said, aloud, "before I approach another subject, I wish to know when you visited Senora Goliari?"

"Yesterday, aunt," she replied, respectfully, yet coldly.

"Without my permission! Without consulting me?"

Carola made no reply. Her air became more haughty. She did not wish to be catechised like a child in the presence of Dr. Kampton.

Miss Parnail was amazed at this opposition to her rule. She frowned and exclaimed:

"Why did you presume to visit a fortune-teller without my permission?"

"It was the first time that I ever presumed to do anything without your permission, was it not?" said Carola, in a cold, sarcastic tone.

Dr. Kampton stared at her in surprise. He had hitherto known Carola to be meekly obedient to her aunt.

Miss Parnail sternly replied:

"Yes, it was the first time. I hope it will be the last."

"It will be the last time that I shall ever think of your permission or prohibition," observed Carola.

"Ah!" cried Miss Parnail, rushing to the door and locking it. "This is no time for trifling. She has heard something."

"Not from you, Miss Parnail. I have long suspected it."

"It! What?"

"That I am not your niece."

Miss Parnail could only stare for a moment. Wonder made her speechless. At length she regained her voice.

"Who told you that—that infamous falsehood!" she cried, advancing close to Carola.

The young lady did not quail. Her eyes met those of Miss Parnail steadily and scornfully.

"My heart has whispered it to me for years," she said. "It is not an infamous falsehood. It is a fact. But here is a note from a gentleman whose veracity you dare not impeach."

Miss Parnail snatched the billet from Carola's hand, and read these words:

"MY DEAR YOUNG LADY:—You are beloved by my son, and I admire his choice. He will not show you this note until you have agreed to be his wife, nor would he do it then except to obey my commands. Miss Parnail may oppose and forbid your marriage with my son. If so let her read this note. You are not her niece; you are not her relative. She knows why she has practised this deceit upon you. So do I, and when we meet I will tell you. You know that she encourages the suit of Dr. Kampton, her nephew."

"Having accepted my son's offer, inform Miss Parnail and accompany Alfred to my house, where all will be in readiness for your protection."

Yours sincerely,

"JAMES REYNOLDS."

Miss Parnail trembled as she read this. Her emotion was perceived by Carola, who watched her keenly.

"It is all coming upon me at once," thought Miss Parnail. "I am in a net. I must cut my way out, or the vengeance of a lifetime will be thwarted."

"Read this, Dr. Kampton," she said aloud, as she extended the note towards him.

He read it, and his swarthy cheek grew ashy white as he read. He loved Carola passionately, madly. Had his rival been before him at that moment he would have down at him with the fury of a bloodhound.

But if not before him he was in the house, waiting to walk away with Carola to make her his wife.

Robert Kampton raised his fierce eyes and flashed them upon Carola. She shrank from their expression.

"This fellow—this Alfred is still in the house, I presume. He is waiting for you?" he asked huskily.

Carola did not deign to answer him. She turned to Miss Parnail and said:

"Mr. Alfred Raymond has made me an offer of

marriage. I love him, as you know, and I have consented to be his wife. You are between me and this door. You have locked it. Am I to consider myself a prisoner?"

"I will tell you presently," replied Miss Parnail, as she secured the key of the door. "I wish to speak first with Dr. Kampton. But be patient."

Carola refrained from calling for aid, though her heart prompted her to do so. She knew that her lover was in the hall, and that her voice, raised to a scream, would hurry him to the locked door. But then there would be a scene. Besides, she knew the desperate character of Dr. Kampton. She knew that he was always armed, and though acquitted, he had slain at least one man. She knew, too, that Alfred Raymond was brave, and would not hesitate to attack Kampton in her defence. She would wait, therefore, until the last moment. Perhaps Miss Parnail, perceiving the uselessness of opposition, might yield.

She waited, often glancing impatiently toward Miss Parnail and Dr. Kampton, as they conversed in low whispers.

At length they seemed to have exhausted the subject, for Miss Parnail advanced, placed the key in the lock, and said:

"Ungrateful girl, leave my house, and leave it for ever."

But as Carola extended her hand to open the door, a heavy, thick gown was cast over her head and face, and in an instant she knew that she was gagged and helpless in the powerful arms of Dr. Kampton.

She felt herself lifted up and carried through several rooms and flights of stairs, as she knew from the opening and closing of doors, and then all became dark to her.

"Place her upon the bed," said Miss Parnail to Kampton, as they reached a remote room.

"She is recovering," he remarked. "She should be as if dead for a time." He opened a case of medicines, and having selected a phial, poured a part of its contents into the mouth of the unconscious girl.

"She will not remain long awake," he said, with a dark smile, as he and Miss Parnail left and locked the room.

"Now I go to amuse the lover," said Miss Parnail, in a low, thrilling whisper.

"And I go to amuse the lover's father," he replied.

They separated. Miss Parnail hastened to the parlour, and Dr. Kampton glided from the house by a passage from the rear.

(To be continued.)

POST-OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.—In reply to a memorial from the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce in favour of a uniform sixpenny rate for short messages, Mr. Seudamore writes: "I am directed to acquaint you that the Marquis of Hartington is not insensible to the advantages derivable from a uniform sixpenny rate for telegrams within the United Kingdom, and that the subject shall receive due consideration when the proper time arrives. At the same time, I am to explain that it is considered that, at all events at the outset, and until the transmitting capacity of the wires of the proposed system of post-office telegraphs shall have been tested, and the training of the reorganised staff perfected by experience, it would be inexpedient for the department to bring upon its telegraphs the enormous increase of business which it is tolerably certain would follow the introduction of any lower uniform rate than 1s."

PORTRAIT OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.—A steamer, bound for England, has recently taken from Venice a remarkable specimen of modern art destined for the Kensington Museum. It is a mosaic portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the size of life, or somewhat larger, executed at Salviati's well-known establishment. The great English painter is represented standing in an easy attitude, a palette on a table beside him, in his right hand a brush, with which he is in the act of mixing the colours. In his left hand is a book, on which may be read the title of his "Discourses." He is in stately costume, with knee-breeches, fur-trimmed jerkin, embroidered white cravat, an ample crimson gown sweeping to the ground in elegant and numerous folds. The countenance is animated and lifelike, and at a short distance has all the effect of a well-executed portrait in oils.

THE LATE MR. HOPLEY'S PICTURES.—The few works on hand of the late Mr. E. W. J. Hopley are now on view, "for the inspection of his friends," at No. 14, South Bank, Regent's Park, and will so remain until the middle of September. Mr. Hopley, in whose death a few months since, at a comparatively early age, English art sustained a severe loss, was a painter distinguished in an exceptional degree by freshness of fancy and vigour of invention. Combining with poetic imagination a delicate sense of colour and executive skill of no common order, he

was qualified to produce pictures equally remarkable for originality of conception and felicity of treatment. Such, for example, were "The Birth of a Pyramid," "Marianne," "The Race for an Apple," "A Primrose from England—an Australian Scene," "Shakespeare and the Muse," "The Cloister," and many others. Of these, which are all too well known to need description, the three first are in the present collection, and with them "Lost in the Forest," and one or two other works, the artist's latest productions. Mr. Hopley, besides being a good painter, was an ingenious mechanic, and the inventor of a trigonometrical system of facial measurements for the use of artists. A picture illustrative of the principles of the system was displayed in the fine arts department of the Great Exhibition. He was also a zealous student of entomology.

A MUSEUM AT SEBASTOPOL.—The committee charged with organising the new museum of Sebastopol has decided on placing in it oil portraits of Nicholas I., Alexander II., and the Grand Dukes Nicholas, Michael, and Constantine. The first acquisitions to be made to the museum will be the lithographed portraits of the defenders of Sebastopol, models of the Russian and foreign ships which took part in the defence and siege, the Russian and foreign publications, engravings, stamps, &c., relative to the Crimean war, pictures representing the defence of the place and all the siege work; in a word, models of all the arms employed during the struggle of which Sebastopol was the theatre. The museum will be opened, if possible, on the 15th inst., when General Todleben, the president of the committee, will visit Sebastopol.

ACCIDENT TO PRINCE ARTHUR.—Last week his Royal Highness Prince Arthur, Lieutenant Royal Horse Artillery, while out on Woolwich Common with the B Battery, 4th Brigade, to which he is attached, met with an accident. It appears that his royal highness has a splendid horse, which is known to be rather difficult to control, and while standing at ease the animal became restive and made a sudden plunge, and took the prince so unawares that he was jerked completely out of the saddle to the ground. Fortunately his royal highness received no injury whatever, and was on his feet again in a moment. The horse scampered off across the common in the direction of the stables, where it pulled up of its own accord, and was soon after led back to its royal master, who remounted and remained in the saddle for the rest of the time he was on duty.

ABNER LAPHAM.

"WELL, Susan, I'm in luck at last!" cried Abner Lapham, entering the kitchen, where his wife was at work.

He threw his hat upon the floor, then sat down by the stove and pulled out his pipe.

"I'm a made man after all this time. Richard Groom has bought the Thorley Farm, and will sell to me the land this side of the road. What d'ye think of that?"

Mrs. Lapham's eyes grew bright, and a pleased expression irradiated her face. The land of which her husband had spoken was a beautiful piece of dry, rich meadow, lying along the southerly line of his farm, and, geographically, belonging thereto. Not only was this land necessary to make up such a farm as Lapham wanted, but it lay directly between him and the main road, and he wished to open a passage that way. He had on several occasions offered far more than the land was worth to anyone else—or more than it was worth in the market—but the former owner would not sell.

"Mr. Groom?" repeated Susan, queringly. "He is the man who has bought the old Cutt's estate?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I'm glad, Abner, you are to have that land. It should never have been sold from this farm. You are sure of it?"

"I am, if Mr. Groom is a man of truth."

"You can depend upon that, I am positive."

"And what do you know about him, Susan?"

"Why, I heard him speak at our conference, last Sunday evening; and I know he is a true man. There are men who can deceive you—bad men who can appear to be good—but I never knew a really good man to appear bad. If you have Mr. Groom's word, you may depend upon it."

"I have it," said Abner, whose pipe was now well lighted, and as he spoke he tipped back at his ease.

"Have you turned the flax, Abner?"

"Not yet."

"You are losing glorious sunshine."

"I must have my smoke first. But—about this land. I have the refusal of it until Saturday, and am to have it for twenty pounds an acre. Only think! I offered Thompson thirty pounds for it."

"That is certainly cheap, Abner, and I hope you won't let it slip from you."

"How can I, if Groom is a man of his word?"

"That's the very thing," said Mrs. Lapham, seriously. And she came and stood by the stove:

"Mr. Groom is not only a man of his word, but his word is his bond. Do you remember the subject of his remarks at the conference?"

"No—I wasn't paying particular attention."

"Ah, Abner, there it is. You invariably let slip the very things you most need. If you hear a funny story at the village you are sure to remember it; but a word of sound philosophy of life you do not heed."

"Well, well—and what did Mr. Groom say that was so wonderful?"

"Not wonderful, Abner; but simple and common sense. He spoke of the value of time and the need of punctuality. He said that time was of more consequence than money. He would much rather a man should fail to pay a bill at the appointed time than fail to keep an appointment in person. Money not paid when due might be subsequently collected, and with interest, too; but time lost was lost forever. He said that the man who robbed him of his time did him full as much practical wrong as the man who should rob him of money. And he closed his remarks by saying that the man who habitually came to his business appointments behind time was one with whom it was unsafe to deal. At all events, he said, you could never depend upon such a man; and with one upon whom he could not depend he preferred to have as little business relation as possible."

"Very good, idea—very good," admitted Abner, puffing forth a dense cloud of smoke.

"And one by which a certain individual of my acquaintance might profit," ventured Susan.

"Bah! Don't be hitting there again!"

Mr. Lapham knocked the ashes from his pipe with an impatient movement, and then went out to his neglected work. For be it known that Abner Lapham was very apt to neglect his work. He was a procrastinator. He was of the very class which Mr. Groom had condemned. He always allowed his own work to accumulate on his hands, thus raising a serious obstacle in the way of punctuality in the engagements with others.

Saturday came.

"What time did Mr. Groom appoint for your meeting at the Thorley place?" asked Mrs. Lapham.

Abner took his pipe from his mouth, and reflected.

"I think it was somewhere about ten o'clock."

"Take care, Abner. If Mr. Groom set a time, be sure there was no 'about' in the appointment. If he said ten, you may depend upon it that he is there at this very moment, ready to transact his business."

Mr. Lapham looked up at the clock. It was already fifteen minutes past the appointed time.

"Was there any arrangement made for delay?" asked Susan.

"I think there was something said about my sending over one of the boys if anything should happen to detain me," dubiously answered the farmer.

"And have you sent one of them over?"

"No, I never thought of it. But I'll be there myself very shortly."

Mrs. Lapham shook her head sadly, while her husband went out to do a few chores at the barn, which he could not leave undone till noon.

At eleven o'clock Abner Lapham came puffing up to the piazza of the Thorley House just as Mr. Groom was stepping into his carriage.

"Ah, friend Lapham, what induced you to change your mind?"

"Me—change my mind?" gasped Abner, in alarm.

"Yes. Why did you give up the meadow?"

"Give it up!" repeated the farmer, aghast.

"Certainly. You have not come at this hour to buy it?"

"Why—yes, sir, I—I—"

"Really, Mr. Lapham, if you have come, at this time, thinking to find our business open, your ideas of the nature of an especial appointment are very different from mine. You promised, if you could not come yourself, to send me word. My time is valuable—"

"But, sir," put in Abner, "only an hour. Surely, there can be no great loss in that."

"Ah," replied Mr. Groom, mildly, and yet sternly, "you forget that I had no knowledge of the time you were to take from me. When the appointed hour was passed, and the minutes had dragged themselves out into almost another hour, how was I to judge what you meant to do, except I assumed the one evident cause of delay—that you had given up the bargain? And, my dear sir, let me assure you, were I to discover that a man had stolen from me a pound, I should conclude that he would, under like circumstances, take all he could get. And so with time."

When a man has robbed me of an hour, I can only judge that he is full as likely to rob me of a whole day, if I place the time at his disposal. But, sir, I am sorry if you are disappointed. Mr. Hamilton has purchased the whole estate. I held back the meadow lot for you, as I promised. Hamilton was very anxious to have it remain with this estate, and he was willing to pay much more than I ask for it. He and I were here at precisely ten o'clock; and here we waited almost an hour, giving you the benefit of so much time lost to us. You did not come—you did not send, and I concluded that you did not want the land. So I sold it to Mr. Hamilton."

Abner Lapham turned away sorrowful and down-hearted. For a week he was angry, and almost sick with disappointment and chagrin. On the following Saturday Mr. Hamilton came to see him. He had heard of the poor man's suffering, and was willing to help him. He offered to convey to Lapham that half of the meadow bordering on his farm, and also to open a permanent right-of-way over the other half to the country road.

This made Abner Lapham happy; and with his happiness came a disposition to be reasonable; and one of his first sober conclusions was, that he who robbed a man of his time might as well take money from a neighbour's pocket; and he made a resolve that he would thenceforth pay more attention to the keeping of his appointments.

I. C. J.

A NEW IDEA FOR JERRY.

JERRY S.—kept a livery stable not very far from our city. One bright morning a well-dressed gentleman, a stranger to Jerry, called for a horse and carriage, to be used for the day; and he was particular to be accommodated with the best.

"I can let you have as good a horse as there is in the city, sir," said Jerry; "but you are a stranger to me, and I must have some—some—"

"Security, you want, eh?"

"Exactly."

"Very well," said the well-dressed gentleman, "what do you call your horse worth?"

"Sixty pounds—the one I will let you have."

"Then suppose I leave with you that amount?"

"That will do, sir."

"All right. Bring out the horse."

The horse and gig were soon at the stranger's service, and having looked them over, he remarked to Jerry:

"I think I am safe enough to take that horse at sixty pounds."

"Every pound is there, sir; and you'll say so when you draw the lines on the road."

The well-dressed gentleman took from his pocket-book the sixty pounds, which he passed over to the stable keeper, after which he jumped in, and drove off.

At night the well-dressed gentleman returned, having had a fine drive of about forty miles.

"Ah—got back, eh?" said Jerry, as the gentleman entered his office.

"Yes, sir; and I would like for you to come out and see if the horse is as good as it was when I took it. We want these things all done straight, you know—no after-claps."

Jerry was pleased with the well-dressed gentleman's manners. He went out; and after due examination, pronounced the horse as good as over.

"Worth as much as it was when I took it, isn't it?"

"Certainly."

"All right. You may give me that sixty pounds, if you please."

They stepped back into the office, where Jerry passed over the sixty pounds. The W. D. G. put them into his pocket-book, buttoned his coat, gave his hat a brush, and said:

"Good evening, sir."

"Hold on!" cried Jerry. "You haven't paid me the use of the horse, sir."

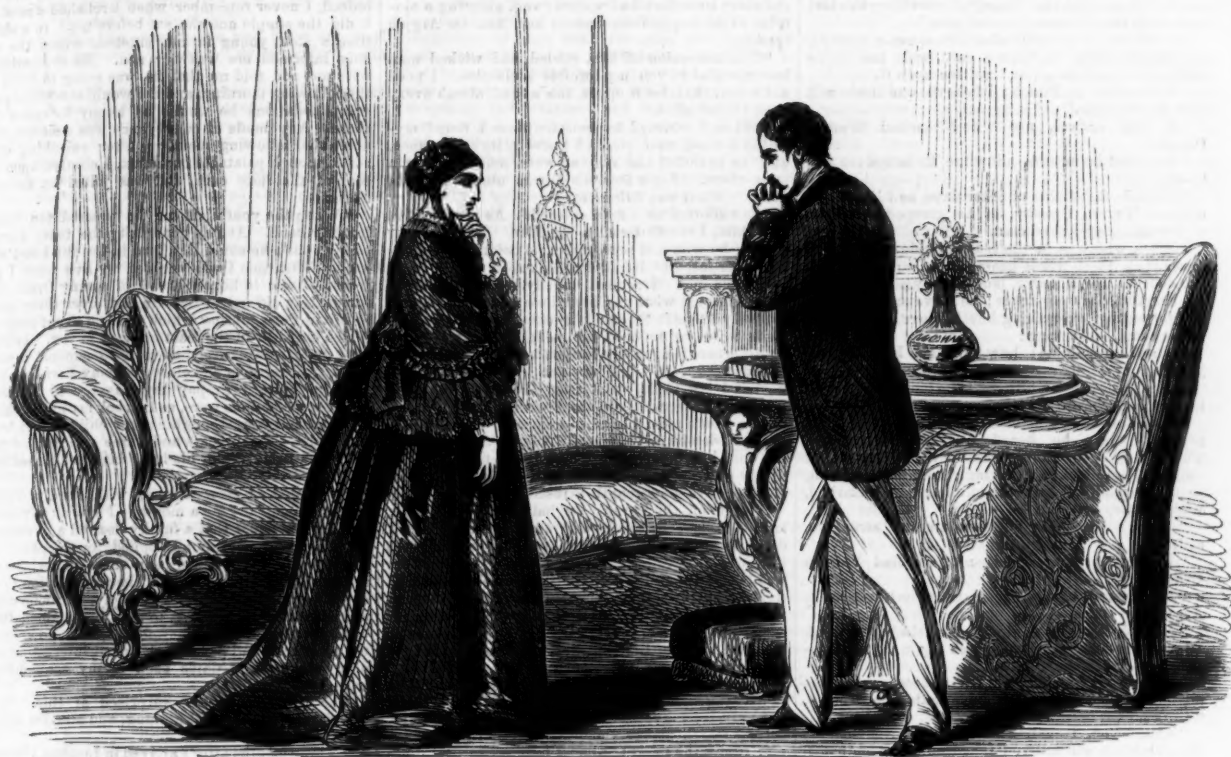
"Paid!—use!—use of what horse?" returned the well-dressed gentleman in surprise.

"Why, the horse you've been using all day!" answered Jerry, emphatically.

"Bless you, my dear man," said the W. D. G., with an affable smile, "I have been driving my own horse. I bought the horse, buggy, and harness of you, this morning, at your own price; and you have now pronounced them worth as much as I paid for them, and have bought them in turn of me. Really, sir, it is a legitimate transaction. If you don't think so, you can consult some legal friend. Good evening, sir."

And the well-dressed gentleman went away, leaving our venerable stable keeper sorely puzzled over this new problem. Jerry had flattered himself that he was thoroughly posted in all sorts of equine mysteries; but, certainly this was entirely a new idea.

S. C. J.



[A REVELATION.]

FAIRLEIGH;

OR, THE BANKER'S SECRET.

CHAPTER LXXI.

ANOTHER day had dawned. 'Twas early morn, and Charles Rowe sat alone in the luxurious parlour, sadly meditative. The events of the day preceding, although bringing new joys to his friends, had only served to make him feel that he alone out of the many who had found new love was an orphan. It was not envy that dwelt in his breast. Oh no, that was a quality that was most remote from his nature; it was a feeling of loneliness, a knowledge of his desolated condition as regarded his parents, that caused the painful expression to rest upon his features, and the sigh to arise from his heart. Even the bright, happy face of Florence, with her love-lit eyes bent upon him, was not powerful enough to disperse altogether his unpleasant emotions.

The day wore on. Friends had gathered around him, and Mrs. Morrill, true to her promise, had returned, and all were together again.

It was at this time that Simon entered, and in his own peculiar way informed the young doctor that there was a lady in the library who wished to see him.

"You, too, doctor, are favoured," said Warren Ormsby, as the former arose.

"Probably Miss Bunt," he replied, with a forced smile.

As he entered the library, he saw, seated upon the sofa, a lady of prepossessing features, though pale, and tinted with melancholy; a form delicate, slight, frail, yet symmetrical. She was dressed in deep black throughout.

He advanced in that polite, graceful way so peculiar to him, and observed:

"I understand you wished to see me, madam; professionally, I presume."

She paused a moment ere she replied, and then said, with evident effort:

"No. I come upon a matter dearer to you than that could ever be."

A look of astonishment pervaded his features, and he quickly answered:

"Pray explain. I do not understand you."

"Your name is not Charles Rowe, is it?"

He hesitated a moment, and then replied:

"No, my name is Carlos de Argyle; but I cannot, or rather shall not, use that name."

"Will you tell me why?"

He regarded her searchingly; the question was a peculiar one for a stranger to ask. But the calm, honest eyes were fixed upon him, and he felt that he was speaking to one whom he could trust. Assuring himself of this, he rejoined:

"I know not who you are, or why you question me thus. I flatter myself, however, that I already know enough of your disposition and character to be certain that you will respect and keep inviolate my words."

She bowed.

"The reason I do not assume my own name," began Rowe, "is because there is a taint upon it in the eyes of the world. I believe my mother innocent of any wrong, and for her very sake I refrain from using my real name, that I may be spared the innuendoes and insinuations which such a course would engender. Indeed, since I knew my real lineage I have not had an hour of perfect happiness. I have nearly lost my life in endeavouring to find some trace of my long-lost parent."

"And you wish to see her?"

"Heavens, madam, what a question! Wish to see her? My whole heart, life, soul, is suspended upon the hope that sometime I may clasp her to my heart, and breathe that dearest of all words, mother—which, within my remembrance, has never passed my lips."

"I can tell you of her!" was borne to his ear in that quiet, dulcet voice.

Amazement, doubt and hope, held him captive for a moment, then he exclaimed:

"Speak—tell me of her! Did you know her, is she alive? answer me!" and he pressed his hands to his brow, which was throbbing wildly.

The lady's face grew paler—she trembled, but made no reply.

"Why do you hesitate, what causes your face to pale? You speak not—I understand not this silence!"

Something in her face caused him to gaze upon her with a kind of wild hope, and in doubting suspense he waited for her to speak.

A few moments passed, and still that awful silence. Determined to break the spell, he asked:

"Was my mother innocent?"

"Yes, yes!" she murmured.

From a strange impulse he leaped to his feet, and advanced towards her. As their eyes met, a tremor shook his frame, and his limbs seemed to bend beneath him, so great was the agitation for which he could give no cause, and the hope which had no foundation. He gazed upon her with eyes unnaturally bright, and a face deathly pale, while his mind was

tortured by the suspense which was past becoming intolerable.

She drew a deep sigh, while tears glistened upon the long lashes of the liquid eyes. She arose, an expression of deep, fervent, holy love, and sublime joy dwelt upon her features, and tottering forward, she cried:

"My son, my son! I am your mother!"

"Heaven, now I thank thee!" exclaimed the son, as he clasped the dear form to his breast, and murmured o'er and o'er, with rapture, happiness and affection increasing at each utterance, that sweet halcyon name, "mother."

For a few moments they remained in each other's embrace, while tears of joy welled up from their hearts, and mingled with each other's, as they coursed down their cheeks. At that moment a knock was heard upon the door. De Argyle opened it, and saw Florence in the hall. He drew her quickly in, and with love and happiness beaming from his features, and in a tone of wild joy, he exclaimed:

"Sweet Floss, my wife. My mother, greet her!"

An instant the fair girl stood bewildered; then as the welcome truth flashed across her mind, she rushed to the lady's arms, exclaiming:

"My mother, too! Oh, now, all my sad thoughts are dispersed."

With mutual love of an instant's birth from natures which at once felt the other's purity and goodness, the two clung to each other.

Then as Mrs. De Argyle disengaged herself, she said:

"My son, how long have you been married?"

"I am not married," he replied.

"But you called Floss your wife," she added.

"Did I?" Well, she is, in my heart, but not my law yet. I was so excited that I knew not what I said."

"Now, Mrs. De Argyle, let us go to the drawing-room, and Charles will introduce you to all our friends. Oh, are we not happy?"

And dancing ahead like a fairy, went Floss, while Charles and his mother smilingly followed.

Great was the astonishment, welcome the addition to their happiness, and glad for De Argyle's sake were the company, as they greeted the pale lady.

Congratulations and remarks flowed from all present, which told Mrs. De Argyle that she was among friend who at once loved her for her son's sake, and who rejoiced in her rejoicing.

After a few moments conversation Charles observed:

"Dear mother, in the years that have passed where

have you been? My joy has at last come, and I await with interest the history of your life—the last to be told, for all have preceded you."

She was about to reply when Simon again entered, and handed Mrs. Dalvane a card, with the words "Mr. Eldon and daughter," written upon it.

"Show them in, Simon; I believe our circle will then be complete."

"A new arrival, my wife?" asked Warren Ormsby.

"Yes—but he enters—allow me to introduce you to—"

"What? Bob Eldon of other days, as I live!" exclaimed Warren Ormsby, as he grasped the hand of the tall, gray-haired man.

Walter, who was in the rear drawing-room, came forward as these words greeted his ear. Through the door he saw a merry, laughing eye, that caused his heart to vibrate quicker; he advanced, saw her, and forgetting everything but his love, clasped her to his arms, exclaiming:

"Nina! dear Nina! how glad am I am to see you!"

Nina did not resist, although the blood swept over her face in crimson waves.

Mr. Eldon had been introduced to half of those present, when he heard Walter's exclamation. Turning he saw his daughter in the young man's embrace. He looked inquiringly, and then seeming to understand the position of affairs, he remarked, with a merry smile:

"Well, Warren, our children are not strangers, at least."

"I should rather think not," replied Warren Ormsby.

"Nor haven't been for some time," interposed De Argyle.

"Now, doctor, you need not have said that, I think I have created sensation enough upon my first appearance," said Nina.

"We are all friends here, and understand the excitable nature of youth," remarked Mr. Ormsby. "Pray do not mind it."

"Thank you, I shall be at home in a moment; Mrs. Dalvane will tell you that I do not remain unacquainted a great while."

"Which I am very glad to hear; your father and my husband are old friends, and you must imagine you have known us as long as he has," continued Mrs. Ormsby.

The embarrassment of the young girl, caused by Walter's abrupt greeting, having worn away, she seated herself at the side of Florence, and said:

"You are the original of that beautiful portrait. Oh, I have longed to see you so much!"

"And I have desired to see you, for Dr. De Argyle has often spoken of you, and I think Walter has," she archly added.

"Who is Dr. De Argyle?" asked Nina.

"O, you don't know, I must tell you, it is all so strange."

And Florence gave her a succinct account of the last two days.

Meanwhile Edgar and Mr. Eldon were holding a pleasant conversation. They had been schoolmates and firm friends in their youth, and this meeting was most agreeable.

"Now, Walter," said Edgar, as he turned again to the company. "Don't you want to ask your father a question?"

"I don't know what you mean, uncle," replied Walter, perplexedly.

"Oh, don't you? Well, you ask Charles and Clarence if they know what I mean?" he replied, with a smile.

Milly's eyes dropped, Florence's face flushed, and, turning to her father, she said:

"You are too bad, papa, and Nina just come."

"We are old folks, my dear, don't blush," he answered, and, turning again to Walter, continued:

"Have you found out, my nephew, what I refer to?"

"Yes, and if Nina and Mr. Eldon have no objections, I am sure I have not."

"As our parents are determined to plague us all they can, Walter," said Nina, pouting; "why I am going to return the compliment by not minding it. And if it must be public, why I am perfectly willing, are you, father?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, my child, Warren Ormsby's son is worthy of my child."

"Give me your hand, Walter Ormsby," said Nina, still firm, but her face aglow, and the teardrops glistening upon the long eyelashes.

And they knelt down and received Mr. Eldon's blessing, which was given in a quivering voice.

What at first was *badinage*, was changed to solemnity, and there was hardly a dry eye in the company when the scene closed.

"Now, mother, will you proceed?" said De Argyle.

The interest of the company had increased during the short time they had waited, and, glancing a moment at the happy faces around her, Mrs. De Argyle began:

"The confession of that misled and wicked man has revealed to you my forcible abduction. I need not repeat that, for it opens the wound afresh every time I think of it."

"When I returned to consciousness I found myself in a small room, which I knew by its appearance, and the sound of the surging water outside, was a state room. For a moment I was numb with anguish. What was I there for?"

"In a short time a man entered. As my eyes fell upon him, I recoiled with a shudder. It was Abner Drake, he who had persecuted me before I had married your father. He advanced, and in mellow tones addressed me. I replied angrily, and then begged him to tell me what had been done with my husband, and why I was in that terrible ship. He told me that his love for me brought me there, and that it made no difference about my husband, that he was to be my husband now. Oh, how can I describe my feelings as I lay there, weak from the other that had deadened my senses, and alone with that man, where no one would raise a hand to help me? Let me pass over the details of that fearful voyage; suffice it to say that I was threatened, and every method taken by my persecutor to force me to become his wife. Heaven gave me strength to resist his advances."

"While on the voyage we hailed a French ship, and I, along with Drake and another man whom I didn't know, were taken on board. The captain was informed by Drake that I was insane, and that he was taking me to Paris to see if the excellent medical treatment there could not benefit me. They, of course, believed it, and I was accordingly watched and characterised as 'de crazy madame.' Once I sought to convince them of the contrary, but Drake pulled me from the deck, and threatened to kill me if I ever spoke of it again. Such misery as I experienced on that voyage can better be imagined than described. When every nerve and artery respond to the terrible sorrow which makes the heart beat with more rapidity, and the mind to almost lose its natural functions, while the body grows weak also, the sensation can hardly be done justice to by words."

"When we arrived at Paris, I was taken to a house, secured in a room and allowed to see no one but my tormentor, who thought by this mode of treatment to bring me to acquiesce to his wishes."

The son's blood boiled as he heard these words, and he listened with acute interest.

"For some months I was kept there, never allowed to go out or see anyone but Drake. At last he began to weary of this, and threatened to put me in a convent. I replied that anything would be preferable to his company, and he left me in great anger. In a short time I was removed to the convent of St. Joseph. There I was treated in almost a barbarous manner, being kept upon bread and water, with little air and no exercise. Under this regimen I could not have survived long, but help came in the shape of a young nun, who took pity on my forlorn condition and smuggled good food to me. To her I was very grateful; she, the only one in the wide, wide world that had assisted me in the least. It was now some ten years since I had been forcibly taken from my native land. To rehearse all my sufferings and pangs of grief, would weary both you and myself; suffice it to say that I existed."

"About this time they became a little careless in their guard, although not to such an extent that I could ever hope for a chance of escape. I bethought myself of a plan, and determined to put it into execution. I feigned insanity to a degree of almost senseless apathy in their presence. I had hoped that this would increase their carelessness; on the contrary, and to my chagrin and disappointment, it only caused them to be more watchful. Now that I had assumed lunacy, I was obliged to continue it until they should see that I was harmless, and once more relax their vigilance. This desirable result was a long time in being reached, however, and for two years I was obliged to play that dreadful rôle, until I often thought that I should really make myself insane."

"At the expiration of that time they really began to think that I was a harmless, lethargic imbecile, and almost entirely relaxed their supervision and caution. This was a long-looked-for blessing, and at dead of night I crept from my cell and silently traversed the devious entries and winding stairways. At last I was free—but where should I go? I had no home, no resting place, no money, no friends; I was, indeed, in a dreadful situation. I walked along the road, and discerning a light in a cottage, I knocked for admission. The door was opened by an old woman who leaned upon a staff; she scanned me closely and rather suspiciously, I thought. Her scrutiny finished, she asked me to come in. I entered

and told her my story; she treated me very kindly, indeed, I never remember when I relished a meal as I did the simple one she sat before me. In a short time a stout young farmer entered, whom the old lady informed me was her son. He sympathised with me, and told me that he was going to Paris on the following morning, and if I would accept his poor accommodations he would be happy to carry me there. Any mode of conveyance was welcome, and upon the following morning, after partaking of a rustic though palatable breakfast, I climbed upon the seat of the rude cart, and was jolted on towards Paris."

"When the youth left me he pressed ten francs into my hand. At this generosity the tears started to my eyes; he could ill afford it, but his heart was kind. With this I was enabled to live until I got work. I was in hourly dread of seeing Drake, but fortunately did not. Let me pass over three years of life in Paris, during which time no event occurred which could be of the least interest to you. I struggled on, earning barely enough to support myself. By extra exertions and close economy I was enabled to save enough to pay my passage to England. What my emotions were, as I struck my native shore, I cannot tell you; thoughts of my child almost drove me wild. Fifteen years and three months had passed since I put him in his little bed, and kissed him good-night."

"I landed at New Haven, with hardly money enough to support me a month. I saw an advertisement to the effect that a family desired a governess. I had no references, but I applied for the place and procured it. After I had been there a short time, I sent an advertisement to the *Times*, in relation to my child. Anxiously I awaited a reply, but none came, and I felt that he was lost to me. I remained there until within the last eight months, and now comes the strangest, and perhaps the most interesting part of my story, for it dates back to my acquaintance with Mrs. Morrill."

The company looked surprised at this. Mrs. Morrill smiled, but said nothing, and Mrs. De Argyle continued:

"Three months after I arrived in London, I became acquainted with her in the following manner: I was in an omnibus, riding down Oxford Street, opposite to me sat Mrs. Morrill. At that moment a man at my side left the omnibus, and very quickly Mrs. Morrill followed him. A moment after I put my hand in my pocket for my purse—it was gone! I suspected both the man and our friend here. Alighting, I crossed the street, and watched Mrs. Morrill. She followed the man, engaged in conversation with him, and alight beckoned to an officer. The policeman and myself arrived upon the scene simultaneously; the man was arrested and my pocket-book restored."

"That, I suppose, was the beginning of your career as a detective?" queried Saunders, addressing Mrs. Morrill.

"Yes, I saw in it a good chance for practice, and determined to avail myself of it," she laughingly replied.

"And very cleverly it was done," remarked Saunders.

Having given a moment's attention to the passing remarks, Mrs. De Argyle continued:

"I at once felt an admiration for the tact and expedition that had characterised her action, and wished to know more of her. She visited me at my rooms, and we became good friends, and as we knew each other better, grew intimate, so that we confided our troubles to each other. A short time after, her husband was killed, and she revealed to me her idea of entering and working against Luke Gibbons. This I counselled her not to do, fearing that she would lose her life. She seemed bent upon it, however, and I could not dissuade her, and I am very glad now that I failed in my attempt. One of her first acts after having gained the confidence of Luke Gibbons, was to remove this dear child,"—pointing to little Maud Waterford, that being her real name—"from his power. This was executed, as all her manoeuvres were, in a praiseworthy manner. To be out of the reach of Luke, I removed to a little town near Brookfall."

"And you resumed my son's child—how can I ever thank you, dear lady!" exclaimed Mr. Waterford, rising and grasping Mrs. Morrill's hand.

"And you," he continued, approaching Mrs. De Argyle, "are Mrs. Ashland?"

"The same, sir; and I shall never forget the pleasure you took with the little girl."

"I was strongly attracted towards her from the first," he answered, pressing the child's rosy cheeks.

"And mother," said Carlos, "you were so near me, and I knew it not."

"Yes, my son; but heaven protected and returned you to my arms. As to my story, I have little more to add. We, the child and myself, lived together very

happily, and grew fond of each other. In a measure, I forgot, or tried to forget, my own grief in ministering to the wants of the child."

"For which, my dear madam, you have my most unbounded gratitude," remarked Mr. Waterford, with sincerity.

A pause now occurred. At last all were reunited and all seemed to feel a holy contentment, that gave freedom to their minds and rest to their hearts—a contentment which is the most pleasant sensation of all joy."

"Mrs. Morrill," said Carlos, breaking the silence, "you knew, and had it arranged that my mother should come to-day, did you not?"

"I did, although she knew not what I wanted of her until the last, that your joy might be greater."

"And could I be more happy? No, I am in a heaven of bliss on earth!" exclaimed Carlos, glancing from Florence to his mother.

"Mrs. De Argyle," said Edgar Ormsby, "I am indebted to your son; he has saved the lives of myself and wife by his great professional skill."

"I am happy to know it, but he is repaid, I think," and she glanced at Florence, who blushed, but said nothing.

"How thankful we ought to be for our blessings," said Warren Ormsby, devoutly. "Though long years have passed, and sorrow, care and grief each of us has experienced, still at last we are all brought together, and happiness, the sweetest earth can give, reigns in our hearts."

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," murmured Florence.

And all eyes were turned towards the speaker. As she thought of all that had passed, a tear of thankfulness dimmed her lustrous orbs. Her father's eyes bespoke an undying love, her mother's glance of pride rested upon her, her brother's happy face was raised to hers. Walter's expression as much as said: "You were the spirit of my dream that made me hope."

And Carlos looked upon her, the mild, deep, holy love beaming from his features, the index of his heart. While she, still smiling through the tear-drops of joy that scintillated upon her translucent orbs, gazed around her, and beheld friends and happiness, love and honour.

CHAPTER LXXII.

A YEAR had passed away, during which time many changes had taken place in the lives of my characters. Edgar Ormsby had been feasted, honoured by the peers and public, and every method taken to show him that the community were anxious to repair the injustice that had been done to him.

This, at first, was only supposed to be from a feeling of courtesy, and to more deeply impress upon the public mind the great wrong that had been inflicted upon an honest man; but as the time for the general elections drew near, and his name was still flaunted in the face of the people, it was but reasonable to suppose that it was uttered in all sincerity. This conjecture was confirmed by a deputation of politicians waiting upon him, and requesting him to allow his name to be used in the coming contest, and telling him that there was no doubt of his success, as he was known to be a man of high principle, and free from party craft and trickery, and that was what the people were determined to have.

He hesitated, but only for a short time. Where is there a man who, although surrounded by honour and fame, will not accept more if it is within his grasp? It is but human that man should thus feel and act, and Edgar Ormsby was not an exception. He knew that it would please his wife and children, and another consideration which urged him to accept was that he would be following in the footsteps of his father—a pleasing reflection, and one that would naturally serve to emulate a son. Accordingly, he accepted, and the genuine joy that it gave his wife and children, not excepting his brother and our other friends who have figured in these pages, made him glad that such had been his decision.

Mrs. Ormsby, proud of this new honour conferred upon her husband, looked forward to the approaching election with hope and anxiety. At last it was over, and new gratification was hers, for Edgar Ormsby had been elected by an overwhelming majority.

Warren Ormsby had entered into partnership with Clarence, and the banking-house was established under the style of W. & C. Ormsby, bankers.

Carlos De Argyle had returned to Brookfall, to the infinite gratification of Miss Priscilla; Bant who hailed his coming as one from the tomb, and lavished upon him all the sweetness of her nature, which at last had broken its bounds, and drowned the acerbity which she had been accredited as having to so great an extent. Indeed, it seemed to De Argyle that a miracle had been wrought, for, instead of snapping, snarling, and lowering brows, he was

the astonished recipient of low, honeyed words, languishing smiles and languid glances, and he at last began to think that Miss Bant had fallen in love with him. If such were the case, she had but to look around her to see the fallacy of her hopes, for the house was filled with carpenters, masons and other mechanics, who were busily engaged in remodelling the premises, and introducing improvements which modern ideas deemed indispensable, and which astonished the staid people at Brookfall, and gave them food for a lively nine days' gossip.

Miss Bant had an indistinct and vague idea of the meaning of this, but wisely kept her thoughts to herself, and said nothing. After this was finished, and the house transformed into a modern mansion, De Argyle requested Miss Bant to accompany him to London. Much surprised, as well as pleased, she readily consented, and the house was closed, and Miss Bant and the young doctor were borne to the great metropolis, where the former was introduced to Edgar Ormsby, M.P., which fact she boasted of until the day of her death.

Having given the reader a slight outline of the doings of our friend Carlos during the year, let me for a moment glance at the fortunes of the other characters.

At the earnest request of his brother, Warren Ormsby had continued to abide with him. Thus the family so happy in their reunion, were kept together to farther participate in the joy that their mutual presence gave to them.

Walter had had new facilities offered him to prosecute his desire for painting, and he entered into it with an ardour and enthusiasm which could not help being successful. His whole soul was in his work, and though so fervent, he had the remarkable quality of recognising his own faults and deficiencies, and as fast as they became apparent to him, he set about correcting them with a perseverance at once commendable.

With pride had his father watched him, and noted the blooming of his genius. With love and exultation had his mother regarded him, as his pictures were spoken of in public, and he, young as he was, already becoming noted. Thankful were the hearts that beat for him, joyous the sighs that told him he was gradually ascending the rugged pathway of fame.

Yes, Walter Ormsby had become quite a celebrated artist. His paintings were in demand, and he could obtain any price for him. How strange it seemed—how inconsistent. Why was it that when he was struggling with poverty, and endeavouring to support his mother, that his paintings could find no market? None would even expose them for sale. Then he had no money. Now, he had a father worth thousands, and an uncle who counted his gold by millions, and he did not need a penny. But now they would pay him any price for his artistic efforts. The thought disgusted him with the injustice and prejudice of the world. He cared not for the money, it was fame that impelled him.

Mrs. Prescott, along with her daughter, her brother, and little Maud, still resided in the genteel brick house in Brooklyn, and were frequent visitors at the Ormsby mansion.

Mrs. Lothrop, whom I have not spoken of for some time, but who was not forgotten by Clarence and his friend, De Argyle, for they presented her with a pretty cottage, and money enough to allow her to live on the interest.

And now allow me to speak a word in relation to the circumstances of our good, honoured friend, Detective Saunders. That gentleman at first felt very keenly his separation from Warren Ormsby, but time served to ameliorate the loneliness, as it does all trouble, and at last he became quite reconciled to his solitude. He had been promoted to the position which Warren Ormsby had held, and feeling the dignity of his office, he refrained from his jokes and witticisms during business hours, and one, to have looked at him, would not have supposed that the stern, quiet man was the gay, rollicking Saunders of other days.

"Words said in jest often prove true." This was the adage that forced itself upon his mind as he sat in the office one morning, with the inevitable Havana between his teeth, and reflecting, as the smoke curled upwards, upon other days and other scenes. He remembered of having told Warren Ormsby that if *Vérité Sans Peur* were a woman, that he would make love to her.

The axiom quoted above he hoped might prove true, for strange to say, Saunders had already fallen a victim to the machinations of wilful little Cupid, and the shafts that entered his heart were glances from the bright, bewitching eyes of the charming Mrs. Morrill. He had admired her tact and modesty; and she, simultaneously, had been pleased with his frank, open manner and cheerful disposition, although he knew it not.

They had become friends, and Saunders had visited her often. With all his wit, he was might be termed a bashful man, and in consequence thereof he made but little progress in his visit.

'Twas about this time that Edgar Ormsby was elected. Saunders was congratulating the favoured one in his mind, when a document was handed him, which turned the current of his thoughts to himself. It was a commission of chief of the police and detective force. He had never dreamed of this, he had imagined that he had risen about as high as he should go—judge, then, of his astonishment and gratification, when this new honour was conferred upon him.

He now felt that it was an imperative duty which he owed to his word and future happiness to win Mrs. Morrill. The sequel will tell of his progress in that quarter.

Again 'twas the twenty-second of February. One year since the dread events had occurred which sent such a tide of sorrow over the hearts of the Ormsby family. Notice the change which the finger of time had wrought. The streets, for nearly a mile near the Ormsby mansion, was lined with carriages. Hundreds of people, bent upon curiosity, were standing around, eagerly watching, hoping to catch a glimpse of the occupants of the vehicles as they glided over the carpets stretched from the streets to the house.

From every window in the house the light shone in golden rays. Inside was all mirth and happiness, glorious strains of dulcet music filled the air, mingled with the breath of fragrant flowers.

The capacious drawing-rooms were one dazzling, scintillating blaze of light, that reflected and sparkled in glittering jets over the jewels that adorned the fairest of necks and whitest of arms.

From the folding doors were hung, so as to form a crescent upon each side, rich Valenciennes lace, looped up and caught with orange flowers, violets and camelias.

Under this were continually passing and repassing beautiful ladies dressed elegantly, with diamonds glistening from their snowy bosoms, arms and necks, while pearls nestled and shone among the folds of their hair; gentlemen finely attired, and bestowing upon their fair companions every attention, perambulated the apartment, while merry laughs were heard, silvery voices rang out clear, and from all to all, and with all, was but one idea, and that was happiness.

While the enjoyment was at its zenith, a noble-looking man entered. A year ago this day he laid in a cell despised and ignored.

Mrs. Ormsby, magnificently, yet genteelly arrayed, hung upon his arm, her face the picture of pride and joy. At the side of Edgar was Warren Ormsby, now known as the great banker; while upon his arm, with holy joy emitting from her liquid eyes, rested his wife—she whose life seemed withered, but had bloomed again in rejuvenating joy.

As they glided among their guests, the greatest respect was shown to them; every courtesy religiously observed, and urbanity, melting and smiling urbanity, greeted them upon every side, and from every mouth. Mrs. Prescott and her brother were there enjoying the festive occasion.

Suddenly the music ceased, the promenaders halted and fell back from the folding-doors. Silence reigned, while expectation was rife.

In a moment all eyes were riveted upon an angelic being in spotless white, with lace dropping over her fair shoulders like fleecy summer clouds, while like golden sunbeams fell her luxuriant curls over a snowy neck—who entered leaning upon the arm of the handsome and noble Carlos de Argyle. Another moment passed, and a second vision of beauty burst upon the gaze of the enraptured spectators, and Milly Prescott entered, her glorious raven locks falling over her snowy shoulders, and creating a contrast which excited the admiration of all. Her dress was rich, yet simple; one orange flower at the breast, where the lace met, was the only ornament; jewellery she wore none, not even a single diamond.

Her companion, as the reader will surmise, and truthfully, was Clarence Ormsby. He has reached the acme of happiness, the highest niche of bliss; he glanced with love at the dear being who raised her eyes to his melting in confidence and affection, and which seemed to say:

"Can it be possible that I over was a seamstress?"

They took their position at the side of De Argyle and Florence. For a moment the guests admired the lovely blonde and brunette, and then attention was directed to another couple who glided in.

Ah, that fair face with its tinge of carmine, those mischievous, sparkling eyes, and that silky brown hair, told the company that they beheld Nina Edou.

"Who is that with her?" asked one of the guests, and twenty voices were heard:

"Why, Walter Ormsby, the celebrated young artist."

A moment elapsed, a silence prevailed, and then a gentleman entered, the chief of police—Saunders, with Mrs. Morrill upon his arm. Her voluptuous and graceful form was robed richly and expensively, and caused much comment. She was, indeed, really beautiful.

The minister now appeared upon the scene, and during the solemnisation of the quadruple marriage, not a sound disturbed the impressive ceremony that opened unto our friends a new life.

The ceremony was concluded. Congratulations, tears, kisses; and the happy grooms led their brides to the banquet hall, where, until a late hour, the festivities were continued. Charles Rowe glanced from his mother to his lovely bride, and murmured:

"Heaven has been good, and we inhabit an elysium of bliss."

"Had I money enough, destitute children should have a home!"

He made true his words, and where once Luke's house stood, now stands a brick edifice, where many a weary, forlorn child has found rest and comfort.

The last of the band whom Dayton—or Warren Ormsby—had captured, met their death at the hands of the executioner, and thus expiated a life of crime. Abner Drake, it was ascertained, was transported for life from England, some three years before the scenes in our previous chapter occurred.

Upon the banks of the Thames, where Mrs. Warren Ormsby's cottage once stood, now rises a mansion of rare and beautiful architecture, and surrounded by magnificently laid-out grounds—the gift from Governor Ormsby to the young artist, where the latter and his wife now reside, and life passes like a sweet dream.

Miss Bunt has found out the meaning of the reconstruction of the mansion at Brookfall, for now, during the summer, a sunny-haired, darling, child wife startles the echoes by her sweet voice, and lives in pure bliss with the worthy man of her choice.

Upon the banks of the Thames, in a gothic cottage, with the sweet honeysuckle, and morning glory clambering up its sides, rests Clarence Ormsby and his beloved wife; he blessed in her, and she blessed in him.

Jolly Saunders never regretted his choice, but says: "That if he had known what married life was, he wouldn't have waited as many years single as he did."

THE END.

TYRON, THE SHRINE-MAKER.

BY THE

Author of "The Black Knight's Challenge," &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALREADY the girls felt like freed birds; but they knew there was much yet to be passed ere the danger could be left wholly behind. For several seconds the trio remained where they had landed, listening to hear if the breeze bore upon its bosom any whisper of alarm. But all was quiet, and at length the old man motioned for the girls to follow him.

"Be very cautious," he said, "and let not even your mantles drag upon the pavement, lest they should start some rolling, tell-tale pebble. Stoop where the shrubbery is low, and keep your ears and eyes open. Come."

Stealthily they crept along the marble walk that led to the river, stopping occasionally to listen, and then gliding silently on. Half the distance had they gained when Zorah, who was behind, uttered an exclamation of alarm.

"What was it?" demanded Saxones, crouching down as he spoke.

"They are coming this way," announced Zorah. "We must seek some place of retreat. The dense foliage will hide us."

And yet Saxones stood still and listened, his right hand clutching something which lay hidden beneath his mantle, and his lips quivering as he heard the tramp of hurrying feet upon the pavement of the same walk he had chosen; and while he thus stood a bright gleam of torchlight shot through an open space in the intervening foliage.

"Come—come!" cried the old man, in a hushed tone. "Follow me quickly. Here, Myrrha—your hand; and do you give yours to Zorah. There is an opening ahead—a by-path that will lead us out from the garden by a wicket which I can open—Come!"

Thus speaking, Saxones grasped his child by the

hand and harried on. The pursuers were now very near, but the curving of the path hid them from view. At a short distance the fugitives came to a narrow, grass-grown by-way, turning abruptly to the left, and, having entered this, they pushed on with renewed speed. Thoughts of liberty, the dread of an incensed master's wrath, together with the smell of heaven's fresh air, lent wings to their feet, and swiftly they glided along the narrow way. At length they reached the garden wall, where they were forced to stop for the opening of the wicket; and hardly had they gained the outside when the step of a pursuer was heard close upon them, and in a moment more the glare of a torch shone through the open wicket.

"We must hide!" exclaimed Saxones, seeing at a glance that to continue the flight over the open space of field would be useless. "Here!—behind these bushes! In—quick!"

The old man pushed Myrrha in among the shrubbery, following quickly after her, while Zorah found a hiding-place farther on. They had just secured the cover when the torch-bearer came rushing to the spot. He was a stout fellow, whom Saxones recognised as one of Ben-Hamoth's bargemen—a coarse, brutal man, who found no greater delight than in beating and kicking those who chanced to be under him. He was alone, and as the old noble could hear no other step he judged that only a single pursuer had come in this direction. The man passed the place where lay Saxones and his daughter; but on the next instant he stopped. The torchlight had flashed upon the crimson mantle of Zorah!

"Aha! So here you are!" he exultingly cried, springing forward, and pushing aside the foliage. "Come forth and show thyself!"

Thus speaking, the strong man seized the frightened girl by the arm, and ruthlessly dragged her out into the path.

"So—you are the maid! Where is your mistress?" he demanded, as the beams of his torch revealed the terrified face.

"I don't know. She is gone. Oh, let me go!—let me go!"

"You know very well where the other is. O, you needn't struggle in that fashion! You can't get away! Now tell me. Where is your mistress?"

The poor girl uttered a sharp cry of pain as the cruel grip tightened torturingly around her quivering arm, but she returned no answer to the man's demand.

Once again Saxones placed his right hand beneath his mantle, and firmly grasped the thing that he had worn in concealment. All depended now upon his decision and fortitude, for he well knew that a single moment lost might consign him to life-long, bitter servitude, and his sweet child to hopeless misery. The ruffian was struggling with Zorah, his back towards them, while the torch, which had fallen to the ground, cast a fitful glare over the scene.

The Campanian noble withdrew his hand from the folds of his mantle, and noiselessly, but quickly, crept out into the path. A moment his eye searched for the most vital point exposed to his reach, and then he sprang upon the brutal bargeman. There was a momentary flashing of something in the torchlight, and ere the ruffian could see who it was that touched him, his heart had been pierced as by a lightning-bolt, and with a wild cry he started up—started up only to reel and stagger away, and to fall backward into the very place whence he had dragged the panting fugitive. And there he lay, sleeping the sleep that only an angel's trump can break!

The old man stopped not to look upon his work, but having returned the keen blade to its sheath, he dashed out the flame, and cast the smoking stump away.

"Come, come," he cried, "there are barges ahead; and they lie where we may take to the water in safety. Let us on once more."

The way was dark and drear, over a low, marshy waste; but with renewed hope the fugitive trio pushed on, and at length the waters of the Cydnus were in sight.

Saxones led the way down upon the river's bank, where he struck into a path which fisherman had trodden in their passage to and fro. It was now near midnight, and a fresh breeze that came over the water rendered the air cool and bracing. At the distance of a league from the gardens of Ben-Hamoth they reached the ground of another dwelling that stood back at some distance from the shore. Here they found boats, and bidding the two girls to remain behind, the patrician crept cautiously forward to observe if the place was unguarded. No sound of sentinel met his ear, nor could he see anything that betokened the presence of watchers. He reached the landing, and after a little search he found a barge that suited his purpose, the chain of which was only hooked upon a ring upon the pier.

Having satisfied himself thus far, Saxones has-

tened back and directed the girls to follow him, and ere long the three were seated in the barge. The chain was cast loose, the bows shoved off, and beneath the influence of a favourable wind and current the freed bark floated down the stream; and when a point had been gained beyond the reach of Ben-Hamoth's messengers, the sail was loosened and given to the breeze, after which the old noble took the helm and guided the swiftly speeding bark towards the sea.

Myrrha now related to her father all that had befallen her since his disappearance from Pompeii. He had no occasion to interrupt her with questions, and when she had concluded he relapsed into a fit of deep musing from which even the occasional swaying of the barge from her course scarcely aroused him.

"You say Tyron has sworn to protect you from the king?" he at length remarked, abstractedly.

Myrrha was busy with her own thoughts, and before she could frame a reply Zorah volunteered:

"Yes, my lord, he has. And he will do it, too."

"How know you that?" demanded Saxones, his voice and manner betraying that, though he could not distinguish the girl's face, yet he was keenly watchful of the intonations of her voice.

"Because he has said so; and what he promises, that will he do," returned Zorah, with simple assurance.

"He is your father?"

"Yes, sir."

"But I knew not that Tyron had a child when he was he was in the service of Festus," pursued the old man, curiously.

Zorah was for some moments silent, and it was evident enough that she felt the need of considering before she answered. At length she said:

"I was not with my father at that time, my lord. When he let himself to Festus, he did not choose to bring his child to the same level. I came to him only when he had taken a home of his own, and had become his own master."

"And where lived you during the years of your father's voluntary bondage?"

"At a distance from Pompeii, my lord."

Saxones seemed not to heed the equivocal turn of the girl's reply, but relapsed into another reflective mood, from which he was aroused by an alarm from her lips.

"Beware, my lord!"

The patrician looked up, and found that the barge was heading in towards the shore. With a light exclamation of self-reproof he put off again, and then turning to Zorah, he remarked:

"Your father does not wear the features of a Pompeian."

The girl made no reply and presently Saxones continued:

"Was he born in Pompeii?"

"I think not, my lord."

"What country gave him birth?"

"There are other cities in Campania besides Pompeii, and of the same country."

"Then he is a Campanian?"

"I was very young, my lord, when Tyron first came to Pompeii; and since reaching the age of discretion I have learned to ask him no questions upon matters which he does not freely present for discussion."

There was manifest a profundity of wisdom and a keenness of retort in the girl's replies which caused the patrician to regard her with something of wonder; and again he mused. Could he have seen the expression that rested upon Zorah's face he would have wondered still more. It was a quiet expression, and yet of keenest significance. There was a curious light in the large brown eyes, and a smile lurked in the corners of her mouth—all of which seemed to say:

"I know the secret, and by it I could read your destiny, if I would."

By and by Saxones aroused himself, and addressed his daughter:

"You said the high-priest of Jupiter aided the shrine-maker in your escape?"

"Yes," answered Myrrha.

"Did they appear to be intimate—to be on terms of friendship and mutual understanding?"

"Perfectly."

"Do you understand the nature of the intimacy between Axion and your father?" the old man asked of Zorah.

"Such a question as that, my lord, you well know I cannot answer; for the high-priest of Jupiter is set apart from his kind, and if, by chance, mine ear hath heard things not belonging to the world, I am not at liberty to communicate them."

"Dear father," interrupted Myrrha, "you need not ask her more questions in that direction, for I have sought their solution in vain. She has been kind—oh, very kind—to me; and let us thank her and be

grateful, rather than seek to perplex and to annoy her."

"You are right, my child," returned Saxones. And though from that time he referred not directly to the subject again, yet it was plain to be seen that it occupied much of his thoughts, and gave him great concern.

The barge was now opposite the city of Tarsus, and the fugitives were sailing past the place where they had been exposed for public sale. The patrician forgot for the time the subject of his late questionings, and turned his attention to guiding his craft clear of danger. One or two boats were moving about near the shore, and a vessel was coming up from the sea. The old man carefully watched the signs on all hands, and though the thought of being overhauled by some chance cruiser from Tarsus gave him temporary concern, yet he trusted to the fresh breeze to take him clear of the danger. The commander of the entering vessel hailed him in the Arabic tongue, and merely returning a friendly salutation, he sped on.

At length the river began to widen—the shores drew farther and farther away—until finally the fugitives knew that the cool Cydnus was behind them, and that they had entered upon the broad bosom of the Mediterranean. For a time the barge sped on, the sail swelling and straining before the pressure of the growing wind; and ere long Saxones began to realise that he had miscalculated in a very important particular. The breeze that had treated his frail bark so kindly while shielded by the banks of the river became quite another thing when he had got some miles out at sea. The girls began to feel sick, and the novice commander was not a little uneasy. He had thought 'twould be an easy thing to run down somewhere on the coast of Phœnicia, and there land, and proceed on foot to a seaport whence a passage to Pompeii could be obtained; but the carrying out of this plan now assumed the promise of much danger and suffering.

In his one great desire to escape from captivity the patrician had fixed but two things in his mind: The chains he should shake off and leave behind, and the loved home he was to gain—he had thought not of the chasm he must successfully bridge. At one time he seriously meditated running back into the river he had left, and there trusting to chance for a passage in some outward-bound vessel; but there was one great difficulty in the way of this movement: He could not make it! He could let his boat run before the wind, but he had no idea of the method of arranging sail and helm so as to make headway against the wind; and especially would this have been difficult against the cresting seas that followed him.

It was very dark, and the coast had been lost to view a long time. Once Saxones attempted to put the barge upon a more southerly course, as in that direction he knew the land must lie; but the experiment came near proving fatal, for as the craft came broadside to the wind she almost went over. As a last resort he lowered the sail, determined not to be driven farther out to sea than he could avoid, having done which he gave his attention thenceforth only to keeping the barge from being overturned by the heaving billows.

The girls had become fairly sick, though the great peril kept them from sinking. The light river barge was tossed and tipped upon the waves; and, though her sail was off, yet the high stern caught a great deal of wind, and she was evidently being fast driven out to sea.

Long and dreary and tedious passed the hours until the morning came, and as the gray beams relieved the horizon of its blackness, Saxones strained his eyes about him on all hands for land; but only a vast, watery expanse, bounded by the blue sky, met his gaze. The sea was running high—high for the light bark that thus tempted its waves to sport—now lifting the adventurers upon a heaving crest, and anon sinking them down, down, into the deep abyss—and all the while tossing the frail thing about, utterly regardless of the commander's almost frantic efforts to preserve a direct course, and leading him, in his reflective moods, to think of resigning himself to death. From the perils that now beset him he knew of no escape within his own littleness of power. He was in the grasp of the invincible force—held as clay in the hands of the potter. As the day advanced he stood up and gazed more eagerly and searchingly around, but the same interminable waste of waters reached to the horizon in every direction.

The girls, who had been giving way to the intensity of their sickness, now aroused themselves. Myrrha uttered a low cry of anguish as she read the story that was so plainly written upon her father's dependent face; and, crouching close by his side, she pillowed her head upon his bosom, while Zorah strained her eyes away over the heaving sea.

"Father, we are lost," murmured Myrrha, with a look that begged for one little ray of hope in the coming answer.

"Lost," repeated Saxones, painfully and hesitatingly. "Alas! why was I so thoughtless?—Lost! And thou, too, my child. Oh, heaven have mercy on us!"

Myrrha tried to hide her own fears when she saw the bursting agony that racked her father's spirit; and in soothing tones she sought to assuage his grief.

"Alas! my sweet child, it is all my fault." Then he raised his trembling hand, and swept in with slow motion towards the horizon. "Behold the wide grave that yawns for us. I cannot express a hope I do not feel. Every wave that breaks upon our frail support lends some of its force to bear us lower and lower down. Let us be prepared for the worst. See—the sun has lifted its bright face above the watery bed, and the golden beams kiss the billows that are to give us sepulchre! Oh, shall we behold its rise again?"

As the old man ceased speaking a wave broke over the barge, drenching the inmates to the skin. Myrrha clung more closely to her father, while he, with nervous grip, sought to keep his boat before the wind. Zorah had raised herself upon an oar-rack that was built around the mast, and silently she swept the dim horizon with her straining eyes. Saxones gazed upon her in wonder; for, amid a host of trial, she forgot not her prudence, and in this hour of mortal danger she alone seemed to think of hope, and to lift her faith above the gloom of doubt and fear. The old man had never seen a fairer picture, and the sight of her hopeful, expectant face, made him almost forget that death was near.

By-and-bye the fair watcher raised herself upon tiptoe, grasped the mast more tightly, and strained her neck to its utmost. Her eyes were directed towards a point in the western horizon where she had caught a speck of white that rested upon the far-off edge of water like a sea-bird. More and more earnestly she gazed, and anon she uttered a quick cry of joy; for, as the barge was lifted upon the top of a swelling sea, giving her vision freer scope, she knew that she had found a sail. She sat down, weary and faint, and Saxones started up in her place. The sail could now be distinctly seen, as the beams of the sun reached farther over the sea, and with new vigour in his frame he hastened to raise a signal of distress. He obtained Zorah's red mantle, giving her his own in its place, and having secured it to the halliards which were used for the pennant, he hoisted it to the head of the mast, and the bright crimson folds were spread to the breeze. An hour of painful suspense passed slowly by, during which time the stranger was coming nearer and nearer.

"They see us! Thank heaven—they see us!" And weak from excitement Saxones sank down upon his seat.

The patrician was right; for as he resumed his place at the helm the vessel had materially changed her course, now standing directly towards them; and in a short time she had reached them. A rope was cast forth; the old noble caught it, and held it firmly; the barge was drawn up beneath the stranger's gangway; and ere long the three fugitives stood upon a firm deck, and amid armed men. Was it another corsair?

"As I live!" exclaimed the commander of the vessel, "old Saxones has come to life!"

The patrician started and gazed around. He was upon the deck of a war-ship of Pompeii.

"By heaven," continued the captain, as his eye fell upon Myrrha, "and here is his fair daughter! Is it not so, my lord?"

"That girl is my child, sir," replied the old man.

"Ho, there, my men! To your posts, and prepare to put about. Our head is now for Pompeii!"

"Can you not land us on the coast of Greece?" asked Saxones.

"No!" answered he of the war-ship. "We go to Pompeii, where five hundred pieces of gold are mine if I but deliver the beautiful Myrrha safely to the king!"

There was a rattling of the ropes; a flapping of the heavy sails; the ship drifted a while without headway; but anon the canvas caught the breeze, and the huge mass had answered the will of her commander—had assumed a new course—the course towards Pompeii.

"This is better than the frail barge," whispered Zorah, whose face was lighted up with radiant joy. "Alas!" groaned Myrrha, "it would be hard to choose between the cold, quiet grave I have escaped and the fate that now awaits me!"

"Oh, my sister!—and have you forgotten all my assurance? Courage! courage! Look up, Myrrha. Hope dwells not at your feet—it is a habitant of the skies!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE sun had sunk into the blue bosom of the Mediterranean, and twilight had cast its mantle of gauze over Pompeii. The king was in his divan, sipping from a golden cup which a slave had just filled with wine.

"Protos," he said, with self-satisfied assurance, "what have we now to fear? That mysterious shrine-maker is dead and buried, and there is none now to thwart us."

"Festus is still at large," suggested the prince. "Bah!" uttered Octavius, contemptuously. "He is a boy, Protos! What have we to fear from such as he?"

"I care not for that so long as she shows not herself in Pompeii," said the king. But if she should perchance return, she is ours."

Protos looked upon his father, and a shadow flitted across his face; for he knew that the king spoke not from cool judgment. The wine-cup had drowned his fears, and shut his eyes to other dangers than those that had passed away in the death of the mystic artisan.

"Ha! whom have we here?" demanded Octavius, setting down his empty cup.

"Sire, there are signals from the shore," announce I a messenger.

"And what say they?"

"One of your ships is approaching."

"From whence?"

"From the south."

"Ha! Say ye so? Now start thee, Protos, and call out the guard!" shouted the king, kicking the golden cup across the chamber as he sprang to his feet. "We have but one ship in the south, and she was not to return for weeks yet save upon one contingency. From the south! Has her signal been made out?"

"Yes, sire—the Lion and the Crown."

"Then, by our royal diadem, the bird is caged at last! Haste thee, Protos, for 'tis our chiefest ship that's coming in."

With eager steps the prince went upon his mission, and after he had gone the king relapsed into a calmer mood. The fumes of the wine had been in a measure dissipated by the startling intelligence he had received, and with sober bearing he awaited the coming of further news.

Hours passed away

Octavius had grown uneasy and nervous; but at length the sound of approaching steps called a flush of expectation to his face, and presently the doors were thrown open. The prince entered, and by the hand he led the fair Myrrha. The king's lips had framed themselves for an exclamation of triumph, when his gaze rested upon another object that caused him to tremble and pale.

"Merciful heaven! Has the sea vomited forth its dead?" he gasped, straining his eyes upon the haggard features of Saxones.

"You behold me once again, sire," returned the old man, meeting the look of his monarch with a steady eye.

"Why is not thy spirit in the other world, old dotard? They told me thou wast drowned?"

"Then they lied to you, sire. I was not drowned."

The touch of his son's hand recalled the king to his senses.

"And so they did lie, good Saxones. I have mourned for thee as for one who was lost to me for ever; but, thank the gods, thou art restored to us alive and well, and in right good season, too."

"I trust it may prove so, sire."

"You must have had a narrow escape," intimated Octavius, curiously.

"Very," returned the old noble, significantly.

"Some stray timber—or, a vessel, perhaps?"

"'Twas neither, sire."

"How? And did you swim?"

"No. I ran."

The king bent eagerly forward, and a perceptible tremor shook his frame.

"I ran," repeated Saxones. And then, with kindling eye, he added—"And now, Octavius, you need not seek farther to blind me, nor to deceive my friends. I was not cast into the sea, as you had so kindly provided for me. You gave my mission to one who loved gold too well for that, and he sold me to a passing corsair, who, in turn, sold me into slavery. But I escaped; and here I am, sire. Helpless and defenceless, save armed in the right, I await your royal pleasure."

Many shades of emotion passed over the face of the monarch while those words slowly and distinctly fell upon his ears. At first he was stricken with dread and alarm, but soon the feeling was overcome, and with resolute effort he assumed the bearing of the ruler—proud, defiant, and determined.

"Saxones," he said, "I did order your death; and I would have had it secret for the sake of your name."

mony. You played the traitor in that you would have thwarted me in a cherished design. But you may live now—live to be the father of a queen."

"Mercy, sire!" cried Myrrha falling upon her knees at the monarch's feet. "Do not force me to this. I am but a poor, humble maiden, and not fit to be the wife of a king."

"Thou art just the one, fair lady—so arise, and give over thy pleading."

As Octavius spoke he took the girl by the hand, and lifted her up. She felt no spirit of resistance, nor did she care to oppose the dire fate further. It seemed to her that the doom was fixed beyond recall; and, bowing her head in the bitterness of her agony, she sobbed aloud.

"Sire," exclaimed the aged father, for the first time moved to supplication, "give over this monstrous scheme. Have pity upon the poor girl you would thus condemn to lasting misery!"

"It cannot be," decidedly answered the king.

"Oh say not so. Hear me! hear me, sire!" supplicated Myrrha, aroused from her painful torpor by the appeal of her father. "I cannot love your son. I should but make him a miserable, unhappy wife—my tears would ever bedew the bridal path, and moans of anguish would be my only speech. Grant my prayer! Oh, sire, grant it!"

"Octavius, will you not listen?" urged Saxones.

"I cannot. She must marry the prince."

"And wherefore?"

"Because —"

"Because what, sire?" anxiously begged the old man, as the monarch hesitated.

For a time Octavius regarded the pleading twain in silence; then he turned and gave directions that the soldiers should withdraw and wait in the ante-room.

"To-morrow," he said, to the captain of his ship, "call upon our treasurer, and he will count out to you the promised reward of gold."

When the attendants had retired and the doors had been closed behind them, Octavius bent upon the old noble a stern, unyielding look, and finally said:

"Saxones, I have not sought the hand of thy daughter for my son because he bears her much love; nor is it to me that the blame—if blame there be—attaches. There is a power above that of the king which hath decreed this thing."

"And that power —"

"The Oracle," said Octavius, shuddering in spite of himself.

"And hath the Oracle of Jupiter truly said that the prince should wed with my daughter?" asked Saxones, eagerly and tremulously.

"Aye," answered the king. "It hath so spoken."

"Then the will of the gods be done!" murmured the stricken parent. And turning to his daughter he added, at the same time laying his palsied hand upon her fair brow:

"We may not resist or implore further. The king of the gods hath spoken—let us humbly bow. Good may come of it to others, though it brings present grief to us."

"And this, then, is my fate?" faintly questioned Myrrha, gazing tearfully up into the monarch's face.

"It is as the god of our city's guidance hath spoken," said Octavius, with a spice of triumph in his tone.

"'Tis false!" pronounced a musical voice at Myrrha's side; and at the same moment the suffering maiden felt her hand grasped by her dear sister.

"Ha! What saying was that?" cried the king, quaking from head to foot.

"I say you speak falsely," returned Zorah, looking calmly upon the monarch.

"Ye gods! How came this mad girl here? Whose face is it she wears? Who are ye?"

"I am one who knows full well what the Oracle spoke," answered the undaunted girl.

"Out upon thee for a liar, thou daughter of Tartarus!" cried the enraged Octavius, with a stamp of the foot.

"The gods gave the message as I have said."

"What good can come of this, thou daring king? Can aught of thy device change the purpose manifest in the revelations of our Oracle? Or, dost think to grasp the decree, and fashion circumstance to it for thine own ambitious ends?"

The king, the prince—and all—gazed upon the bold, defiant girl. Octavius' anger was changed to astonishment of the blankest description, and his frame shook with a fear he could not define.

"Bah! What senseless babbling is this?" he at length exclaimed. "Have you any tangible meaning, girl?"

"I mean what I have said, king. The Oracle prophesied not that Myrrha should wed with your son."

"What was the prophecy?" demanded the monarch, in a quick, breathless whisper.

"The words of the Oracle were these," answered Zorah: "She who dwells beneath the roof of Saxones, and is called Myrrha, shall be Queen of Pompeii."

"Aye—by marrying with the prince, my son," quickly added Octavius.

"It said not so," persisted Zorah.

"But so it must have meant; and so it shall be!" madly cried the king.

Zorah smiled—a smile so significant, so wondrously deep in hidden meaning—that Octavius was more affected by it than by the words she had spoken.

"Ye gods!" he gasped, "tell me who thou art."

"The daughter of an honest man," she proudly answered. "Tyron, the shrine-maker, is my father."

"Ha! Now I see it in thy face; and a fit child art thou of such a sire!"

A moment of quivering wrath, and then a grim smile of triumph lighted up his features.

"Such poisonous fruit will soon wither and die after its parent stock is cut off! Now, girl, take heed to thyself how that tongue of thine runs riot, for thy father can no longer shield and protect thee."

"You know him not, Octavius."

"I know that he is dead."

"Dead!" shrieked Zorah, starting forward and grasping the monarch by the wrist. "Said you—Dead?"

"Yes."

"And he died at your hands?"

"No, no!" involuntarily dropped from Octavius' lips, as he quailed before the fierce fire that burned in those strange brown eyes.

"Then how died he?—how?"

"He died in the temple, and Axion sent his body hither that I might see it. So I know, and rejoice, that he is safely dead."

Zorah let go the king's wrist, and while a shadow marvellously soft and solemn overspread her fair face, she said, in significant tone.

"Oh king! 'tis well for thee thy hand did not the deed!"

"And if I had, would his pretty daughter have avenged him?" demanded Octavius, in mocking mood.

"Aye—I would have avenged him!" exclaimed Zorah, her eyes burning like orbs of liquid fire. "Had hand of yours harmed but a hair of Tyron's head, your proud palace should have been your funeral pyre, and upon your foul carcass the carrion bird should have satiated!"

The inspired girl stood like a goddess. Her right foot was extended; her head thrown back; her finely-cut nostrils dilating; while her finger pointed significantly downward. A single step Octavius took towards her; but he dared not touch her. It was not the weak woman he feared; but who should say she was not favoured of the gods? A few seconds he stood quailing before her; and then, shaking off the incubus, he turned to his son and said:

"This poor girl has lost her senses. The Lady Myrrha shall be yours, my son."

"She must be mine," returned the prince; but his voice was unassured and faltering.

"She shall be yours this very night. What, ho! Without, there!"

An attendant entered.

"Go ye, and bid the priest Albanns that he attend me here. Tell him the business requires promptness and dispatch."

Myrrha cast an inquiring, imploring glance upon Zorah, murmuring, as she did so:

"Ah, my sister, where now are all our hopes?"

"Strong and true and steadfast!" promptly replied the artisan's daughter. "Let this thing go on."

"But your father's protecting care is withdrawn. He is dead!"

"I have another!"

Myrrha could not comprehend the meaning of these strange words; but ere she could speak farther she met the gaze of the king fixed keenly upon her, and with a fearful shudder she turned to her father. He folded her to his bosom; but 'twas a weak and faltering embrace; and he could only make speech in a sad and broken murmur:

"It is our destiny!"

(To be continued.)

THE NEW BAYONET.—The proposed new bayonet of the British infantry is the same as that supplied to the Irish constabulary. It is a saw sword-bayonet—that is to say, it has a sword-edge and a saw back, while the point is as effective as that of an ordinary bayonet. It is of the same length of the present weapon, but the Martini-Henry rifle itself is 3½ inches shorter than the Snider-Enfield,

and the total length of the arm as a spike is therefore reduced by so much. The committee, in recommending this saw-sword bayonet, appear to have had in view the fact that bayonets will henceforth be less frequently used than in former times as weapons of offence and defence; they desired therefore, to substitute an instrument of more general utility. The efficiency of the weapon as a sword, as a saw, and as a bayonet, was carefully tested. With the sword edge a sheep was cut up into joints; and with the saw back the shin-bone of an ox, a Norway spar 2½ inches in diameter, another of 3½ inches, and a 3-inch balk of very tough dry elm were sawn through. The weapon fixed to the rifle was also thrust through a dead sheep with its wool on and wrapped in a great coat; and the security of the attachment of the weapon to the rifle was tested by twisting it about inside the sheep, and by driving it six inches through a 1-inch door, and allowing it to swing while sticking in the wood. Thus the soldier will have a tool as well as an effective military weapon, and one with which he can clear away wood, cut materials for fascines and gabions, or he can use it, if he likes, as a knife for cutting up his rations.

FACETIÆ.

A WAG who was asked to buy a bank-note detector one day, said he would purchase it if it would detect a bank-note in his pocket.

A SHREWD old gentleman once said to his daughter, "Be sure, my dear, you never marry a poor man; but remember that the poorest man in the world is one that has money and nothing else."

A COMPARISON.

During the assizes, in a case of assault and battery, where a stone had been thrown by the defendant, the following clear and conclusive evidence was drawn out of a Yorkshireman:

"Did you see the defendant throw the stone?"—"I saw a stone, and I'm pretty sure the defendant throwed it."

"Was it a large stone?"—"I should say it wur a largish stone."

"What was its size?"—"I should say a sizeable stone."

"Can't you answer definitely how big it was?"—"I should say it wur a stone of some bigness."

"Can't you give the jury some idea of the stone?"

"Why, as near as I recollect, it wur something of a stone."

"Can't you compare it to some other object?"—"Why, if I wur to compare it, so as to give some notion of the stone, I should say it wur as large as a lump o' chalk!"

UNPOETICAL REPLY.—A hardy seaman, who had escaped one of the recent shipwrecks upon our coast, was asked by a good lady how he felt when the waves broke over him. He replied, "Wet, ma'am—very wet."

A LADY was examining an applicant for the office of maid-of-all-work, when she interrogated her as follows: "Well, Mary, can you scour tin ware with alacrity?" "No, ma'am," replied Mary; "I always scour them with sad."

FATIGUE DUTY.—A certain reverend gentleman in the country was complaining to another that it was a great fatigue to preach twice a day. "Oh!" said the other, "I preach twice every Sunday, and make nothing of it."

STERNE.—Some person remarked to him that apothecaries bore the same relation to physicians that attorneys do to barristers. "So they do," said Sterne; "but apothecaries and attorneys are not alike, for the latter do not deal in scruples."

ONE BITE AT A CHERRY.—A young fellow once offered to kiss a Quaker. "Friend," said she, "thee must not do it." "Oh, by Jove! but I must," said the youth. "Well, friend, as thee hast sworn, thee may do it, but thee must not make a practice of it."

"I SAY, ma," exclaimed a little minx of thirteen, "do you know what the pyrotechnical remedy is for a crying baby?" "Gracious goodness me! no; I never heard of such a thing, dear." "Well, ma, it's rocket."

A STRANGER from the provinces, after being courteously taken to places of public interest in the city and asked if anything more could be done for him, replied, "I wish to go where I can see the Grecian bend."

AN Arab thief having obtained entrance surreptitiously into the house of a merchant, an inhabitant of Mecca, made up a convenient bale of goods to decamp with, and was on the point of leaving the premises, when he happened, in the dark, to strike his foot against something hard on the floor. Thinking it might be an article of value, he picked it up,

and put it to his tongue, when, to his equal mortification and disappointment, he found it to be a lump of rock salt. Having thus tasted the salt of the owner, his avarice gave way to his respect for the laws of hospitality, and throwing down his booty, he withdrew empty-handed.

A LABOUR OF LOVE.—A person in this city advertises for a "boy to work on cake." As that is a kind of "labour" always particularly attractive to youth, the advertiser will not likely be heard complaining of lack of applicants.

A GENTLEMAN had a cask of wine, from which his servant had stolen a large quantity. When the master perceived the deficiency, he diligently inspected the top of the cask, but could find no trace of an opening. "Look if there be not a hole in the bottom," said a bystander. "Blockhead!" he replied, "do you not see that the deficiency is at the top, and not at the bottom?"

A CERTAIN Scotch friend of ours, who is not a member of the temperance society, being asked by a dealer to purchase some fine old Jamaica rum, dryly answered: "To tell you the truth, sir, I canna say I'm very fond of rum; for if I tak' mair than six tumblers, it's very apt to give a body the headache."

EXTREMELY CIVIL.

"When shall I call again about that little bill?" "Don't trouble yourself, my good fellow; I won't impose on you so much as to ask you to call again about it."

A WAITER NOT A CUSTOMER.—A wag went into an eating-house, and after giving his order to the servant, sat down, and was not troubled with his presence again for nearly twenty minutes, when at last the servant came and said:—"Here's your things, sir." "You must be mistaken," replied the wag; "I am not a customer, am I? If I am not mistaken, I have been a waiter here for a very long time." The servant let the plate fall and vomited.

SHORT AND SHARP.—"Why, Mr. B.," said a tall youth to a little person who was in company with half-a-dozen huge men, "I protest, you are so very small I did not see you before." "Very likely," replied the little gentleman; "I am like a sixpence among six copper pennies—not easily perceived, but worth the whole of them."

PLAIN LANGUAGE.—Mr. John Clerk, in pleading before the House of Lords one day, happened to say, in his broadest Scotch accent, "In plain English, ma Lords;" upon which Lord Eldon jocosely remarked, "In plain Scotch, you mean, Mr. Clerk." The prompt advocate instantly rejoined, "Na matter; in plain common sense, ma lords, and that's the same in 'a' languages, ye'll ken."

THE HEIGHT OF POLITENESS.—As one of our merchants was counting up his cash the other evening, he came upon a counterfeit half-sovereign. "Who took this?" he asked. "I did, sir," said a clerk. "Well, couldn't you tell it was a bad one? Who did you get it of?" "I took it of a stranger. I changed it for him." "Why, didn't you notice it was bad? Why didn't you look at a detector?" "Because the gentleman seemed in such a hurry I did not wish to detain him."

THE WATCHMAKER'S WOOLING.

Oh listen, fair Gemma, whilst thus I state my case,
In words which from my heart spring, nor turn
aside your face,
The key I now will give of all my grief and woe—
Chain'd to your side, for tho' wound up, alas! I cannot go.
To regulate my movements in vain I often try—
From thee there's no escapement, as a lever I should die.
Pray for your bow then take me, let us our hands unite,
Restore the balance of my brain, for you're unkinged it quite.
No hunter after pleasure you e'er shall find in me,
An open face, my jewel, I'll always show to thee—
I madly count the seconds that slowly seem to pass,
If you refuse me I'll get screwed, by taking to the glass.—Will-o'-the-Wisp.

A FIRST OFFENCE!

The Act for the better preservation of sea-birds, passed some time ago is having a beneficial effect. The first conviction has actually taken place, a certain tradesman of Sheffield having the other day, been fined half-a-crown for shooting eight-and-twenty gulls at Flamborough Head. As this is the first offence that has been committed since the Act was passed, it is no less satisfactory to note the alacrity of the police authorities, who have dragged the offender before the tribunal of justice, than the severe punishment with which the magistrates have

visited the crime. Really though, if we are to expect cases of this kind to occur once every two years, which, according to police experience, is about the rate to be expected, the force should, in all fairness, be augmented for the heavy extra duty imposed upon it.—*Tomahawk.*

WRONG IN A LETTER.—Mr. Grenville Murray invokes in his favour the liberty of the press. What Mr. Grenville Murray represents is not the liberty of the press, but its liberties.—*Punch.*

A CONVEYANCE.—To the uninitiated, whatever property a legal instrument may be intended to convey, there is one thing it rarely conveys; i.e., its precise meaning.—*Punch.*

MUSICAL NOTE.—We have no patience with Offenbach. In the full tide of his deserved success "he has determined," so says a musical journal, "to throw up his pen." Depend upon it, if he does, he'll catch it.—*Punch.*

"THANK YOU FOR THE NEXT."

Car-driver (to party who has been standing treat): "Thank yer honour; sure, I feel quite another man after that—and he's a mighty dry 'un, too."—*Fun.*

At a church in Essex lately, the clerk, feeling unwell, asked his friend, the railway porter, to take his place for a Sunday. He did so, but being worn out with night-work fell asleep. When the hymn was announced, a neighbour gave him a nudge, upon which he started up, rubbing his eyes, and called out, "Change here for Elmswell, Thurston and Bury."—*Musical Standard.*

ROSE AND ROSABELLA.

The waiting maiden, Rosie, stands,
Folding her small and ruddy hands,
Where light and warmth and sweet perfume
Make dreamland of the robing-room.

Then silken robes come crowding there,
And snowy shoulders, warm and bare,
Gleam as the burnos barred with gold,
Fall off in soft and careless fold.

Low Rosie stoops the belle beside,
Whose satin slipper is untied,
And wonders in her silent way
If Rosabel is common clay;

And how 't would feel to wear a silk,
Have little fingers white as milk,
And jewels in her ears aglow,
And lace on shoulders white as snow;

Till, ere she tied the slipper's knot,
The time and place were both forgot;
When, soft and low, there trembled nigh
The bitter anguish of a sigh,

And Rosabella whispered, "There,
Leave the rosette, I do not care;"
Then nodded, as a poorly squire
Came for her belle-ship to inquire.

Rose, watching, saw her lovely face
Grow pale and calm, without a trace
Of feeling, as, with languid air,
She walked beside him coldly fair.

Ah! Rosie saw the glance she sent
Along the stairway as she went;
Saw too the red blood upward go
From shoulder white to brow of snow,

As Guy, the painter, poor and proud,
Watched for her coming, smiled and bowed,
So even simple Rosie knew
That wealth had won what love should woo.

Then Rosie blessed her own red hands,
Which, lacking gold or jewelled bands,
Were still her own to give away,
With heart of love, ere Easter Day.

So when she fain would richer be,
For Roger's sake, this memory
Would bid the poor ambition lie,
Recalling Rosabella's sigh.

E. L.

GEMS.

PRUDENCE and love are not made for each other; its proportion as love increases prudence diminishes.

He who gains the victory over great insults is often overpowered by the smallest; so it is with our sorrows.

Love is far from being a gay passion. True love is almost always chagrined, melancholy and ill-humoured.

A man is more faithful and true to another person's secret than his own; a woman, on the contrary, keeps her own secret better than another's.

To be in company with those we love satisfies us;

it does not signify whether we speak to them or not, whether we think on them or different things, to be near them is all.

ACTIONS speak more forcibly than words; they are the test of character. Like fruit upon a tree, they show the nature of a man; while motives, like the sap, are hidden from our view.

A MILD answer to an angry man, like water cast on the fire, abateth his heat; and from an enemy he shall become thy friend. Consider how few things are worthy of anger, and thou wilt wonder that any but fools should be wroth.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

DETECTION OF COCCULUS-INDICUS AND PICRIC ACID IN BEER AND PORTER.—A method recently devised by Herr Köhler, for the detection of picrotaxine, the active principle of cocculus-indicus, is based upon the fact that when ammonia is present, acetate of lead precipitates as insoluble matter from beer such substances as dextrine, gum and glucose, while the picrotaxine, which is not thus precipitable, can be removed by means of ether from an acidified liquid. The beer or porter is first rendered distinctly alkaline by ammonia, the precipitate thus caused, consisting of phosphates, &c., is allowed to settle, and when the liquid is clear, a boiling hot and concentrated solution of acetate of lead is cautiously added as long as it causes a precipitate. Excess of lead solution should be avoided. The precipitate collected on a filter is washed with hot alcohol, the lead is removed from the filtrate by sulphuretted hydrogen, and after filtration the liquid is evaporated on a water bath to the consistence of a syrup; the residue is treated with ether, which dissolves any picrotaxine present. This is very similar to the method proposed by Lassaigne for detecting picric acid, only in the latter case the addition of ammonia is dispensed with.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ANOTHER LADY DOCTOR.—A young lady, Madame Brès, has successfully passed, within the last few days, her examination for the degree of bachelor of medicine. During the progress of her study, she was the object of respectful attention on the part of professors and fellow-pupils. It is to be presumed therefore, that she will not always remain a bachelor.

The Prince of Wales has presented to the Exeter Museum a mummy and coffin discovered during the progress of some excavations recently made in Egypt, by command of his Royal Highness, with the sanction of the Viceroy of Egypt. Mr. S. Birch, of the British Museum, pronounces the mummy to be the body of Amonhetpai, a man, prepared by the wax process. The coffin is covered with hieroglyphical inscriptions, an explanation of which has been supplied by Mr. Birch.

BANK OF ENGLAND NOTES.—At the close of the first half of the present year, 1890, there were in circulation 1,682,600 *£*l. Bank of England notes, 444,400 10*l.* notes, notes from 20*l.* to 100*l.* of the aggregate value of 6,896,000*l.*, 200*l.* to 500*l.* notes of the value of 1,807,000*l.*, and 1,833 1,000*l.* notes. Thus the total value of the Bank notes held by the public was 23,393,000*l.* The bullion held amounted to 18,624,000*l.*, the 15,000,000*l.* securities making a total of 33,624,000*l.* held against the notes issued or in reserve.

RUSSIAN IMPERIAL TEA.—There is, however, one variety to be obtained in Russia which I have found nowhere else, not even in the Chinese seaports. It is called "imperial tea," and comes in elegant boxes of yellow silk emblazoned with the dragon of the Hang dynasty, at the rate of 1*l.* 6*s.* to 4*l.* a pound. It is yellow, and the decoction from it is almost colourless. A small pinch of it, added to ordinary black tea, gives an indescribably delicious flavour—the very aroma of tea blossom; but one cup of it, unmixed, is said to deprive the drinker of sleep for three nights.—S. V.

NEW STEAM-YACHT FOR EARL GROSVENOR.—Messrs. Laird Brothers have launched from their yard at Birkenhead a small screw steam-yacht, which they have built for Earl Grosvenor, for use on the locks adjoining his estate on the coast of Sutherlandshire. She was christened the More Vane, by Miss Annie Laird, daughter of Mr. John Laird, jun. The accommodation for passengers is in a raised house forward, with large ports, the crew being provided for in a small house at the after end of the engine space. The engines being on board the More Vane at the time she was launched, the yacht was at once tried, the machinery working most satisfactorily.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

AN OLD TALE.—Declined with thanks.

A. G. E.—Up to twelve months.

C. E. H.—If you can prove that the will was made under intimidation, it can be set aside.

W. M.—We never heard of the proceeding before, and suspect someone has been hoaxing you.

DIE HAND.—Unless you can prove that she is swearing falsely, you will have to pay a weekly sum towards the support of the child.

W. B. DUNN.—1. The facts chronicled in "The Fate of Genius" possess a melancholy interest; but we cannot give them a place.

M. M.—We cannot direct you to any particular shop where you can dispose of your studies. There was, some months ago, a stationer's shop in Gray's Inn Lane where old postage stamps were bought and sold.

WILLIAM H. K.—1. Yes, smoking does tend to stop the growth, besides being productive of all sorts of other evils, paralysis, softening of the brain, &c. 2. Dancing in moderation is not injurious.

SIGNORITA.—There is an intense sympathy between the stomach and the brain. The former is evidently out of order; try a tonic of quinine and iron, and take plenty of exercise in the open air.

QUINBLE.—That is the interjection of laughter. Ah! it is an interjection of sorrow. The difference betwixt them is very small, as consisting only of what is no substantial letter but a mere aspiration.

GEO. W. C.—Your verses are very graceful and tender, and do not lack a certain poetical power. If the subject were not so dolorous, we would willingly give the poem a place in our columns. We shall be glad to hear from you again.

A DISTRACTED ONE.—The person you speak of is a sneak, whom you ought to treat with contempt. The girl is not so much to blame; but you should hold yourself aloof from both if you would preserve your peace of mind.

ARTHUR'S DARK-EYED PET.—You were decidedly wrong in passing the gentleman and the lady. It might have been his sister, and even if there were no relationship between them you are wrong to be jealous, and jump at absurd conclusions. If you had stopped, all might have been explained. You are piqued a little.

VINDEX.—News-writers, in the reign of Charles II., collected from the coffee-house information which was printed weekly and sent into the country. The *London Gazette*, then the only authorised newspaper, contained little more than proclamations and advertisements.

VIVASH.—Velvet is a fabric of Chinese origin; the manuscript of Theodulf, which dates in the eighth century and consequently at a time when the fabrics of Byzantium and Italy were not in existence, includes amongst its coloured illustrations a pattern of figured velvet, of which the Chinese origin is evident.

FLEET STREET.—One of the first coffee-houses in London was that opened by Thomas Garraway, in Change Alley. It was the first house in London where tea was dispensed to the guests. It was much frequented by people of quality who had business in the city, and by wealthy citizens. It has survived for two hundred years, though not as a coffee house. It is now a combination of a lunch-house and an auction-room.

NASCY.—To dye the hair black: Take equal parts of litharge and lime; mix well, and form into a paste with water, if black is desired; with milk, if brown. Well wash the hair with soda and water to keep it from greasy; then lay on the paste pretty thick, and cover the head with oil-skin or cabbage leaf, after which go to bed. Next morning the powder should be carefully brushed away and the hair oiled.

SEBASTAPOL.—1. To cure deafness, take three drops of sheeps gall, warm, and drop it into the ear on going to bed. The ear must be thoroughly syringed with warm soap and water in the morning. The gall must be applied for three successive nights. It is only efficacious when the deafness is produced by cold. The most convenient way of warming the gall is by holding it in a silver spoon over the flame of a candle. This remedy has been often tried with perfect success. 2. Handwriting requires much improvement.

JESSIE.—1. To restore your hair rub the part requiring it frequently with onions. The stimulating powers of this vegetable are of service in restoring the tone of the skin, and assisting the capillary vessels in sending forth new hair; but it is not infallible. Should it succeed, however, the growth of these new hairs may be assisted by

the oil of myrtle berries, the repote of which, perhaps, is greater than its real efficacy. These applications are cheap and harmless, even when they do no good; qualities which cannot be attributed to the numerous quack remedies that meet the eye in every direction. 2. If you took a little more pains your handwriting would be elegant.

HYSTERIA.—1. The fit may be prevented by the administration of thirty drops of laudanum and as many of ether. When it has taken place, open the windows, loosen the tight parts of the dress, and sprinkle cold water on the face. A glass of wine or cold water should be given when the patient can swallow. Avoid excitement and tight lacing. 2. Under the circumstances you should not go to the theatre. 3. Handwriting very fair.

YOUNG MOTHER.—You should not allow your servant to do so; to awaken children from their sleep with a noise or in an impetuous manner is extremely injudicious and hurtful; nor is it proper to carry them from a dark room immediately into a glaring light or against a dazzling wall, for the sudden impression of light debilitates the organs of vision, and lays the foundation of weak eyes from early infancy.

PHILIP BROWN.—You have not acted with proper dignity. A wise man never flies into a passion, especially with a person below him, intellectually and socially. Your manager was decidedly in the wrong, but you should have set that fact before his eyes clearly and temperately. There is no necessity for apologising. If he does not look at the affair in its proper light and ask for an explanation, better that things should stand as they are.

GERTRUDE VARLEY.—To "shine in society" it is not necessary to be crammed with all sorts of information accumulated only for the purpose of making a refutation of a highly intellectual and well-informed young lady. We agree with you in your detestation of the shallow-brained, frivolous "girl of the period," but we fear you are running into the other extreme. The crown and glory of a woman is her modesty, which should not be confounded with affected timidity or foolish bashfulness. Study more, and refrain from so much "general reading."

THE HARVESTER.

The harvests of the earth are here,
The Reaper reaps the grain;
The labourer proves his trophies dear;
The Autumn brings him sheaves of gold.
The seed he planted in the mould
Hath borne its fruitage manifold;
And now the Reaper homeward hies,
With heart and hand, to bear the prize.

The toiler thinks no more of heat,
Of labouring days or weary rest;
Or cloudy skies or showers of rain—
He thinks of all the harvest gain;
He thinks of cool, refreshing streams,
Of welcome shades where labour dreams;
For well his heart within him sings
The song which honest labour brings.

The harvests of the earth are here,
The Reaper boards the grain;
The winter frost may soon draw near,
But not to want nor pain.
The Reaper of the Sheaves is wise,
To toil with earth and air and skies.

C. W. B.

EPICURE.—1. To make ginger cakes: To two pounds of flour add three quarters of a pound of good moist sugar, one ounce best Jamaica ginger well mixed in the flour; have ready three quarters of a pound of lard melted, and four eggs well beaten. Mix the lard and eggs together, and stir into the flour, which will form a paste; roll out in thin cakes and bake in a moderately heated oven. 2. For soda cake, take of flour, half-a-pound; bicarbonate of soda, two drachms; tartaric acid, two drachms; butter, four ounces; white sugar, two ounces; currants, four ounces; two eggs; warm milk, half-a-teacupful.

RAZOR.—The pole which, even now in country places, projects over the shaver's shop door, indicated at first that persons might be bled there, as the patient, when phlebotomy was performed, grasped a tall rod to keep the arm steady and distend the veins. Clever men appeared among the barbers, and began to practise as medical men—on the whole, no doubt, with advantage to the humbler classes; their right to do so was quickly recognised by custom, and Henry VIII. granted them a charter of incorporation, which, for several centuries, was the sole document which made their occupation legal.

SOCIAL PHILANTHROPE.—Costermongers, itinerant dealers in fruit, vegetables, fish, &c., derive their name, it is said, from *costard*, a favourite apple. The London costermongers are useful, frequently, in relieving the markets when glutted; and it was said, in 1890, that 3,000,000 passed through their hands annually. On November 22, 1890, they held a meeting in order to represent to the city authorities the hardships they felt by the police restricting their means of livelihood.

CITIZEN.—Exeter Change, London, was built by Walter Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter and Lord Treasurer, in 1319; it was belated by order of the queen-regent Isabella, in 1336. It was entirely demolished at the period of the Strand Improvements, in 1829. The new Exeter Change, built by the Marquis of Exeter, near its site, and running from Wellington Street to Catherine Street, with a passage on each side of which are shops for fancy articles, was opened in 1845. It was pulled down in 1863, and the ground now forms part of the site of the Gaiety Theatre.

ITALIAN GIRD.—1. Dissolve two ounces of borax in three pints of water; before quite cold add thereto one teaspoonful of tincture of myrrh and one tablespoonful of spirits of camphor; bottle the mixture for use; one wingglassful of the solution added to half-a-pint of tepid water is sufficient for each application; this solution applied daily preserves and beautifies the teeth, extirpates tartarous adhesion, produces a pearly-like whiteness, arrests decay, and induces a healthy action in the gums. 2. To remove freckles: Dissolve in half-an-ounce of lemon juice, one ounce of Venice soap, and add a quarter-of-an-ounce each of oil of bitter almonds and dehydrated oil of

tarter. Place this mixture in the sun till it acquires the consistency of ointment. When in this state add three drops of the oil of rhodium, and keep it for use. Apply it to the face and hands in the following manner: wash the parts at night with elder flower water, then anoint with the ointment; in the morning cleanse the skin from its oily adhesion by washing it copiously in rose water. 3. Don't meddle with your hair for a month or two, and see the result. 4. Careful practice will improve your handwriting, and writing from dictation your spelling.

LOTHERY.—Covenanters was a name particularly applied to those persons who, in the reign of Charles I., took the solemn league and covenant, thereby mutually agreeing to stand by each other in opposition to the projects of the king; it was entered into in 1639. The covenant or league between England and Scotland was adopted and solemnly received by the Parliament, September 25, 1638, and was accepted by Charles II., August 16, 1639, but repudiated by him at his restoration in 1661, when it was declared to be illegal by Parliament, and copies of it ordered to be burnt all over England.

LANCELOT.—Advertising for wives is not confined to Europe and America. It is done in China. This is said to be peculiar to the north, but there is reason to believe that it is not uncommon in other parts of the empire. There is even a character in the language to express this process of procuring a helpmeet which shows that it is not new but of some standing. Nor is this all; husbands are sometimes advertised for. If a father has an only daughter, and is unwilling to part with her, this method is resorted to. An orphan is sought, in order that they may obtain a young man who has no ties, and who can come and stay with them, and his daughter be under no necessity of going to the house of her husband's parents, as is the usual arrangement.

PAW.—1. Chess was a game invented, according to some authorities, by Palamedes, 650 B.C.; and according to others, in the fifth century of our era. The learned Hyde and Sir William Jones concur in stating that the origin of chess is to be traced to India. 2. The automaton chess player (a piece of machinery) was exhibited in England in 1769. A chess congress was held at New York in 1857, and an international one in London in June and July, 1862. 3. A chess club was formed at Slaughter's Coffee House, St. Martin's Lane, in 1747. 4. A Danish, known as Philidor, played three matches blindfold at the Salopian; he died in 1795. 5. The London Chess Club was founded in 1807, and St. George's in 1833. In December, 1861, Herr Paulsen played ten games at once, of which he won five and lost one; three were drawn, and one not played out.

PURE TEACHER.—1. Language must either have been originally from heaven, or the fruit of human invention. The latter opinion is embraced by Homer, Lucretius, Cicero, and most of the Greek and Roman writers; the former by the Jews and Christians, and many prominent modern philosophers. Some suppose Hebrew to be the language spoken by Adam; others say that the Hebrew, Chaldean, and Arabic, are only dialects of the original tongue. 2. The original European languages were thirteen, viz., Greek, Latin, German, Slavonian, spoken in the east; Welsh, Hiscayan, spoken in Spain; Irish; Albanian, in the mountains of Epirus; Tartarian, the old Illyrian; the Tassyan, remaining yet in Labrador; the Chaudin, in the north of Hungary; and the Fanie, in East Friesland. From the Latin sprang the Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese; the Turkish is a mixed dialect of the Tartarian. From the Teutonic sprang the present German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, English, Scotch, &c. 3. Read Max Muller on the "Science of Language."

LEONIE.—A great deal has been said and written about mothers-in-law, and for a long time it has been the delight of the wittings to hold up those who occupy that relationship to ridicule and contempt. Doubtless there are many interfering mothers-in-law, who, from vanity and a meddlesome disposition, contrive to make things very unpleasant for the young husband and wife. But as a general rule, mothers-in-law have too sincere an interest in the happiness of their sons and daughters to act otherwise than with kindness and tolerance. Unfortunately, they too often have occasion for the exercise of the latter quality, for it often happens, more especially in the case of a young wife, that prejudice conquers good breeding, and that, at the first intercourse, there is a lurking defiance in the eye which boldly challenges interference. This is the vanity of young wives. If there were less of that conventional prejudice there would be more harmony. You have asked our advice as to how you should conduct yourself when your husband's mother arrives. We have endeavored to indicate in what way you may err. Your own good sense will do the rest.

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